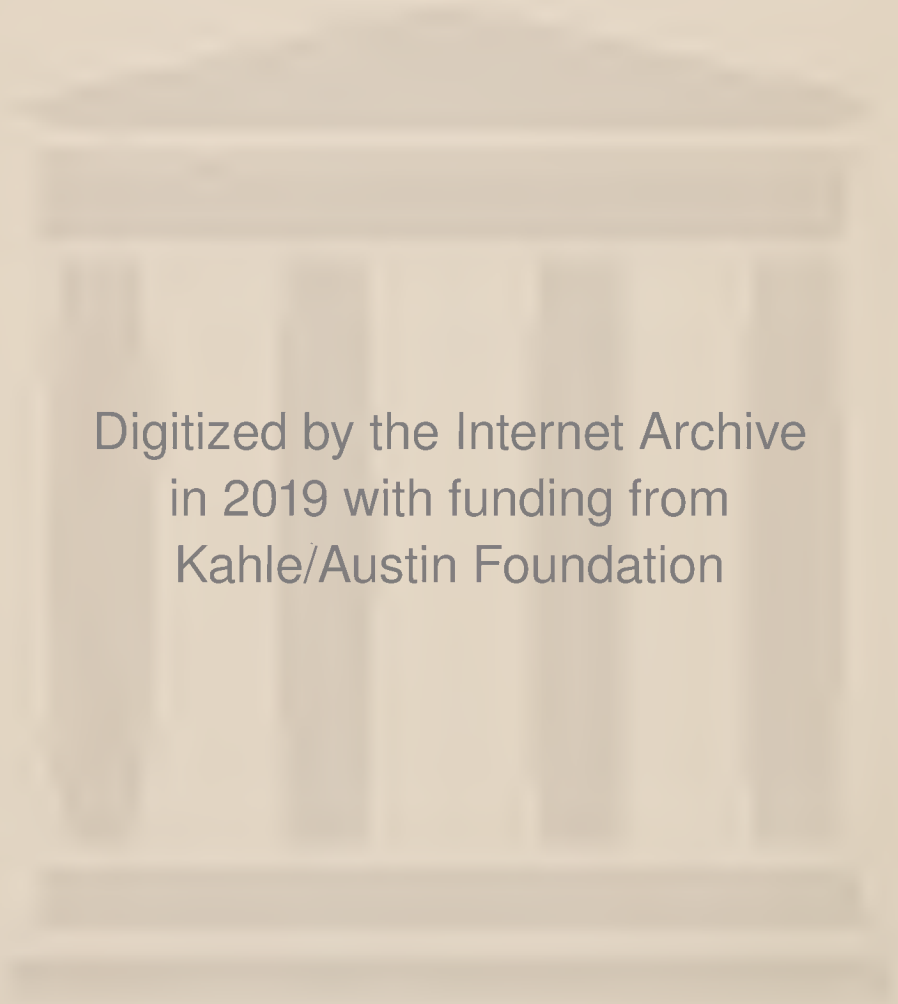

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Days of the Dandies

Beau Nash

Written by

Oliver Goldsmith

Together with the Comedy of Beau Nash, by Douglas Jerrold. Also, Beau Fielding, by Grace and Philip Wharton

Printed by

The Grolier Society

London

DA718 .N3G5

EDITION DE LUXE

Limited to One Thousand Copies
for England and America

No. 693

Edinburgh Press

TO

THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL,

THE MAYOR, RECORDER, ALDERMEN,

AND COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BATH;

THIS VOLUME

IS HUMBLY INSCRIBED BY

THEIR MOST OBEDIENT HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE EDITOR.[1]

[1] This dedication first appeared in the second edition. Both editions had for frontispiece a fine portrait of Nash, in his white hat and laced coat, engraved by A. Walker, from the "original painting by Mr. [William] Hoare, [R. A.], and presented to the Corporation of the City of Bath." — ED.

80353

ADVERTISEMENT[1]

We have the permission of George Scott, Esq. (who kindly undertook to settle the affairs of Mr. Nash, for the benefit of his family and creditors), to assure the public that all the papers found in the custody of Mr. Nash, which anyways respected his life, and were thought interesting to the public, were communicated to the editor of this volume; so that the reader will at least have the satisfaction of perusing an account that is genuine, and not the work of imagination, as biographical writings too frequently are.

[1] This is the author's advertisement. It appeared first in the second addition. — Ed.

EDITOR'S NOTE

"THE Life of Richard Nash" was first published in October, 1762, nearly two years after Nash's death. Goldsmith's visit to Bath in the summer of 1762 has, of course, a connection with the work; but whether the author had much, or any, of his materials before going to Bath, or acquired the materials during his visit, are moot points. Indeed, of the matter for the "Life" acquired from Scott and Morgan, and of Nash's own papers themselves, very little is known, save what Goldsmith tells in his "Advertisement," and in his notes at pages 5, etc. The second edition appeared in December, 1762. It had several additions and corrections, and is the edition we here reproduce entire. Most of the few reprints there have been since Goldsmith's own two editions are imperfect, Prior's in the "Works," 1837, being exceedingly so. In the latter, whole pages are absent and unaccounted for. Though both the author's editions of 1762 were anonymous, the

work seems from the first to have been attributed to Goldsmith. An early criticism pronounced it an imitation of Johnson's "Life of Savage;" and perhaps it was this imputation which caused Doctor Johnson — Mr. Johnson then, and but newly Goldsmith's friend — to send to Newbery's to actually buy an early copy — *vide* the Newbery Mss. Percy did not include the "Life of Nash" in his edition of Goldsmith's works, thinking that Goldsmith merely "revised and corrected" it for Newbery. Mitford took the same view. But most other editors think it fairly out of, and above, the merely compilation works of the author. The general verdict is that it is the best of Goldsmith's biographies. Mr. Forster traces some of the happiness of the performance to a sort of fellow feeling with the beau, which he (Mr. Forster) assumes as being entertained by Goldsmith. Concerning the author's general faithfulness to facts in this work (a faithfulness sometimes doubted) a note will be found at page 26. In addition, it may be stated that Chalmers, in his "Biographical Dictionary," relied almost exclusively upon Goldsmith's narrative for his life of Nash, and handsomely acknowledged the obligation. Indeed, most of the biographies of Nash may be traced to Goldsmith's

work. In the author's receipt for the payment for this biography, the fourteen guineas there mentioned as "in full for the copy of the 'Life of Mr. Nash,'" have appeared to some editors as a rather small sum for an 8vo. volume of some two hundred and fifty pages. Or, as Mr. Forster has put it, the "Life" was "a clever book for fourteen guineas." But it may have been that more or less of the expenses of Goldsmith's trip to Bath entered into the account. It having been stated that the minute book of the Corporation of Bath disclosed the fact that the Corporation paid Goldsmith £15 for this "Life of Nash," Mr. Peach examined the city books, with the result that "no such statement can be found," *vide* Peach's "Historic Houses in Bath," etc., 1883, page 43.

PREFACE

The following Memoir is neither calculated to inflame the reader's passions with descriptions of gallantry, nor to gratify his malevolence with details of scandal. The amours of coxcombs and the pursuits of debauchees are as destitute of novelty to attract us as they are of variety to entertain; they still present us but the same picture, a picture we have seen a thousand times repeated. The life of Mr. Nash is incapable of supplying any entertainment of this nature to a prurient curiosity. Though it was passed in the very midst of debauchery, he practised but few of those vices he was often obliged to assent to. Though he lived where gallantry was the capital pursuit, he was never known to favour it by his example, and what authority he had was set to oppose it. Instead, therefore, of a romantic history, filled with warm pictures and fanciful adventures, the reader of the following account must rest satisfied with a genuine and candid recital, compiled

from the papers he left behind, and others equally authentic; a recital neither written with a spirit of satire nor panegyric, and with scarce any other art than that of arranging the materials in their natural order.

But though little art has been used, it is hoped that some entertainment may be collected from the life of a person so much talked of, and yet so little known, as Mr. Nash. The history of a man who for more than fifty years presided over the pleasures of a polite kingdom, and whose life, though without anything to surprise, was ever marked with singularity, deserves the attention of the present age; the pains he took in pursuing pleasure, and the solemnity he assumed in adjusting trifles, may one day claim the smile of posterity. At least, such a history is well calculated to supply a vacant hour with innocent amusement, however it may fail to open the heart, or improve the understanding.

Yet his life, how trifling soever it may appear to the inattentive, was not without its real advantages to the public. He was the first who diffused a desire of society, and an easiness of address among a whole people, who were formerly censured by foreigners for a reservedness of behaviour

and an awkward timidity in their first approaches. He first taught a familiar intercourse among strangers at Bath and Tunbridge, which still subsists among them. That ease and open access first acquired there, our gentry brought back to the metropolis, and thus the whole kingdom by degrees became more refined by lessons originally derived from him.

Had it been my design to have made this history more pleasing at the expense of truth, it had been easily performed, but I chose to describe the man as he was, not such as imagination could have helped in completing his picture. He will be found to have been a weak man, governing weaker subjects, and may be considered as resembling a monarch of Cappadocia, whom Cicero somewhere calls "the little king of a little people."

But while I have been careful in describing the monarch, his dominions have claimed no small share of my attention. I have given an exact account of the rise, regulation, and nature of the amusements of the city of Bath, how far Mr. Nash contributed to establish and refine them, and what pleasure a stranger may expect there upon his arrival. Such anecdotes as are at once true and worth preserving are produced in their order, and

some stories are added, which, though commonly known, more necessarily belong to this history than to the places from whence they have been extracted. But it is needless to point out the pains that have been taken, or the entertainment that may be expected from the perusal of this performance. It is but an indifferent way to gain the reader's esteem, to be my own panegyrist; nor is this preface so much designed to lead him to beauties, as to demand pardon for defects.

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BEAU NASH

HISTORY owes its excellence more to the writer's manner than to the materials of which it is composed. The intrigues of courts, or the devastation of armies, are regarded by the remote spectator with as little attention as the squabbles of a village, or the fate of a malefactor, that falls under his own observation. The great and the little, as they have the same senses, and the same affections, generally present the same picture to the hand of the draughtsman; and whether the hero or the clown be the subject of the memoir, it is only man that appears with all his native minuteness about him; for nothing very great was ever yet formed from the little materials of humanity.

Thus none can properly be said to write history, but he who understands the human heart, and its whole train of affections and follies. Those affections and follies are properly the materials he has

to work upon. The relations of great events may surprise indeed; they may be calculated to instruct those very few who govern the million beneath, but the generality of mankind find the most real improvement from relations which are levelled to the general surface of life; which tell, not how men learned to conquer, but how they endeavoured to live; not how they gained the shout of the admiring crowd, but how they acquired the esteem of their friends and acquaintance.

Every man's own life would perhaps furnish the most pleasing materials for history, if he only had candour enough to be sincere, and skill enough to select such parts as, once making him more prudent, might serve to render his readers more cautious. There are few who do not prefer a page of Montaigne or Colley Cibber, who candidly tell us what they thought of the world and the world thought of them, to the more stately memoirs and transactions of Europe, where we see kings pretending to immortality, that are now almost forgotten, and statesmen planning frivolous negotiations, that scarce outlive the signing.

It were to be wished that ministers and kings were left to write their own histories. They are

truly useful to few but themselves; but for men who are contented with more humble stations, I fancy such truths only are serviceable as may conduct them safely through life. That knowledge which we can turn to our real benefit should be most eagerly pursued. Treasures which we cannot use but little increase the happiness, or even the pride, of the possessor.

I profess to write the history of a man placed in the middle ranks of life; of one whose vices and virtues were open to the eye of the most undiscerning spectator; who was placed in public view without power to repress censure or command adulation; who had too much merit not to become remarkable, yet too much folly to arrive at greatness. I attempt the character of one who was just such a man as probably you or I may be, but with this difference, that he never performed an action which the world did not know, or ever formed a wish which he did not take pains to divulge. In short, I have chosen to write the life of the noted Mr. Nash, as it will be the delineation of a mind without disguise, of a man ever assiduous without industry, and pleasing to his superiors without any superiority of genius or understanding.

Yet, if there be any who think the subject of too little importance to command attention, and had rather gaze at the actions of the great than be directed in guiding their own, I have one undeniable claim to their attention. Mr. Nash was himself a king. In this particular, perhaps no biographer has been so happy as I. They who are for a delineation of men and manners may find some satisfaction that way, and those who delight in adventures of kings and queens may perhaps find their hopes satisfied in another.

It is a matter of very little importance who were the parents, or what was the education of a man who owed so little of his advancement to either. He seldom boasted of family or learning, and his father's name and circumstances were so little known, that Doctor Cheyne used frequently to say that Nash had no father. The Duchess of Marlborough one day rallying him in public company upon the obscurity of his birth, compared him to Gil Blas, who was ashamed of his father. "No, madam," replied Nash, "I seldom mention my father in company, not because I have any reason to be ashamed of him, but because he has some reason to be ashamed of me."

However, though such anecdotes be immaterial,

to go on in the usual course of history, it may be proper to observe that Richard Nash, Esq., the subject of this memoir, was born in the town of Swansea, in Glamorganshire, on the 18th of October, in the year 1674.[1] His father was a gentleman, whose principal income arose from a partnership in a glass-house; his mother was niece to Colonel Poyer, who was killed by Oliver Cromwell, for defending Pembroke Castle against the rebels. He was educated under Mr. Maddocks at Carmarthen School, and from thence sent to Jesus College, in Oxford, in order to prepare him for the study of the law. His father had strained his little income to give his son such an education; but from the boy's natural vivacity, he hoped a recompense from his future preferment. In college, however, he soon showed that

[1] This account of his parentage is confirmed by the following memorandum, written by Mr. Nash himself in a book belonging to Mr. Charles Morgan, at the coffee-house in Bath; whence it was transcribed by George Scott, Esq., to whom we are indebted for this and many other anecdotes respecting the life of Mr. Nash: "My father was a Welsh gentleman, my mother niece to Colonel Poyer, who was murdered by Oliver for defending Pembroke. I was born Oct. 18, 1674, in Swansey, Glamorganshire." — *Goldsmith.* [This note did not appear in the first edition. The book at Morgan's Coffee-house is again mentioned by Goldsmith in a note further on. — ED.]

though much might be expected from his genius, nothing could be hoped from his industry. A mind strongly turned to pleasure always is first seen at the university; there the youth first finds himself freed from the restraint of tutors, and, being treated by his friends in some measure as a man, assumes the passions and desires of riper age, and discovers in the boy what are likely to be the affections of his maturity.

The first method Mr. Nash took to distinguish himself at college was not by application to study, but by his assiduity in intrigue. In the neighbourhood of every university there are girls who, with some beauty, some coquetry, and little fortune, lie upon the watch for every raw amorous youth, more inclined to make love than to study. Our hero was quickly caught, and went through all the mazes and adventures of a college intrigue, before he was seventeen; he offered marriage, the offer was accepted, but the whole affair coming to the knowledge of his tutors, his happiness, or perhaps his future misery, was prevented, and he was sent home from college, with necessary advice to him, and proper instructions to his father.[1]

[1] Since the publication of the first edition of this book, notice has been taken in some of the newspapers of Mr. Nash's leaving

When a man knows his power over the fair sex, he generally commences their admirer for the rest of life. That triumph which he obtains over one only makes him the slave of another, and thus he proceeds conquering and conquered to the closing of the scene. The army seemed the most likely profession in which to display this inclination for gallantry; he therefore purchased a pair of colours, commenced a professed admirer of the sex, and dressed to the very edge of his finances. But the life of a soldier is more pleasing to the spectator at a distance than to the person who makes the experiment. Mr. Nash soon found that a red coat alone would never succeed; that the company

the university without discharging a small debt which he owed to the college where he was placed, and which stands on their books to this day. This is a circumstance which we were informed of before the publication of our former edition; but as our business was to write the life of Mr. Nash, and not to settle his accounts, it seemed to us too immaterial to deserve any particular notice; besides, had we paid any regard to this, we ought also to have taken some notice of another anecdote communicated to us, which was that when he was sent from college he left behind him a pair of boots, two plays, a tobacco box, and a fiddle, which had engaged more of his attention than either the public or private lectures. But as this, as well as the other, could afford neither entertainment nor edification, they were purposely omitted. — *Goldsmith.* [This note appeared first in the second edition. — ED.]

of the fair sex is not to be procured without expense, and that his scanty commission could never procure him the proper reimbursements. He found, too, that the profession of arms required attendance and duty, and often encroached upon those hours he could have wished to dedicate to softer purposes. In short, he soon became disgusted with the life of a soldier, quitted the army, entered his name as a student in the Temple books, and here went to the very summit of second-rate luxury. Though very poor, he was very fine; he spread the little gold he had in the most ostentatious manner, and though the gilding was but thin, he laid it on as far as it would go. They who know the town cannot be unacquainted with such a character as I describe; one who, though he may have dined in private upon a banquet served cold from a cook's shop, shall dress at six for the side box; one of those whose wants are only known to their laundress and tradesmen, and their fine clothes to half the nobility; who spend more in chair-hire than housekeeping, and prefer a bow from a lord to a dinner from a commoner.

In this manner Mr. Nash spent some years about town, till at last his genteel appearance, his constant civility, and still more, his assiduity,

gained him the acquaintance of several persons qualified to lead the fashion both by birth and fortune. To gain the friendship of the young nobility little more is requisite than much submission and very fine clothes. Dress has a mechanical influence upon the mind, and we naturally are awed into respect and esteem at the elegance of those whom even our reason would teach us to contemn. He seemed early sensible of human weakness in this respect. He brought a person genteelly dressed to every assembly; he always made one of those who are called very good company, and assurance gave him an air of elegance and ease.

When King William was called to the throne, Mr. Nash was a member of the Middle Temple. It had been long customary for the Inns of Court to entertain our monarchs upon their accession to the crown, or some such remarkable occasion, with a revel and pageant. In the earlier periods of our history, poets were the conductors of these entertainments. Plays were exhibited, and complimentary verses were then written; but by degrees the pageant alone was continued, Sir John Davis being the last poet that wrote verses upon such an occasion, in the reign of James I.

This ceremony, which has been at length totally discontinued, was last exhibited in honour of King William, and Mr. Nash was chosen to conduct the whole with proper decorum. He was then but a very young man; but we see at how early an age he was thought proper to guide the amusements of his country, and be the *Arbiter Elegantiarum* of his time; we see how early he gave proofs of that spirit of regularity, for which he afterward became famous, and showed an attention to those little circumstances, of which, though the observance be trifling, the neglect has often interrupted men of the greatest abilities in the progress of their fortunes.

In conducting this entertainment, Nash had an opportunity of exhibiting all his abilities, and King William was so well satisfied with his performance that he made him an offer of knighthood. This, however, he thought proper to refuse, which in a person of his disposition seems strange. "Please your Majesty," replied he, when the offer was made him, "if you intend to make me a knight, I wish it may be one of your poor knights of Windsor, and then I shall have a fortune at least able to support my title." Yet we do not find that the king took the hint of increasing his for-

tune. Perhaps he could not; he had at that time numbers to oblige, and he never cared to give money without important services.

But though Nash acquired no riches by his late office, yet he gained many friends, or what is more easily obtained, many acquaintances, who often answer the end as well. In the populous city where he resided, to be known was almost synonymous with being in the road to fortune. How many little Things do we see, without merit or without friends, push themselves forward into public notice, and by self-advertising attract the attention of the day! The wise despise them, but the public are not all wise. Thus they succeed; rise upon the wing of folly or of fashion, and by their success give a new sanction to effrontery.

But beside his assurance, Mr. Nash had in reality some merit and some virtues. He was, if not a brilliant, at least an easy companion. He never forgot good manners, even in the highest warmth of familiarity, and, as I hinted before, never went in a dirty shirt to disgrace the table of his patron or his friend. These qualifications might make the furniture of his head; but for his heart, that seemed an assemblage of the virtues

which display an honest, benevolent mind, with the vices which spring from too much good nature. He had pity for every creature's distress, but wanted prudence in the application of his benefits. He had generosity for the wretched in the highest degree, at a time when his creditors complained of his justice. He often spoke falsehoods, but never had any of his harmless tales tinctured with malice.

An instance of his humanity is told us in *The Spectator*,[1] though his name is not mentioned. When he was to give in his accounts to the Masters of the Temple, among other articles, he charged "For making one man happy, £10." Being questioned about the meaning of so strange an item, he frankly declared that, happening to overhear a poor man declare to his wife and a large family of children that £10 would make him happy, he could not avoid trying the experiment. He added, that if they did not choose to acquiesce in his charge, he was ready to refund the money. The Masters, struck with such an uncommon instance of good nature, publicly thanked him for his benevolence, and desired that the sum might be doubled, as a proof of their satisfaction.

[1] In a paper on "Beneficence," by Steele, in No. 248 of *The Spectator*. — ED.

Another instance of his unaccountable generosity, and I shall proceed. In some transactions with one of his friends, Mr. Nash was brought in debtor twenty pounds. His friend frequently asked for the money, and was as often denied. He found at last that assiduity was likely to have no effect, and therefore contrived an honourable method of getting back his money without dissolving the friendship that subsisted between them. One day, returning from Nash's chamber with the usual assurance of being paid to-morrow, he went to one of their mutual acquaintance and related the frequent disappointments he had received, and the little hopes he had of being ever paid. "My design," continues he, "is that you should go and try to borrow twenty pounds from Nash, and bring me the money. I am apt to think he will lend to you, though he will not pay me. Perhaps we may extort from his generosity what I have failed to receive from his justice." His friend obeyed, and, going to Mr. Nash, assured him that, unless relieved by his friendship, he should certainly be undone; he wanted to borrow twenty pounds, and had tried all his acquaintance without success. Mr. Nash, who had but some minutes before refused to pay a just debt, was in

raptures at thus giving an instance of his friendship, and instantly lent what was required. Immediately upon the receipt, the pretended borrower goes to the real creditor, and gives him the money, who met Mr. Nash the day after. Our hero, upon seeing him, immediately began his usual excuses, that the billiard-room had stripped him; that he was never so damnably out of cash; but that in a few days — "My dear sir, be under no uneasiness," replied the other, "I would not interrupt your tranquillity for the world; you lent twenty pounds yesterday to our friend of the back stairs, and he lent it to me; give him your receipt, and you shall have mine." "Perdition seize thee!" cried Nash, "thou hast been too many for me. You demanded a debt, he asked a favour; to pay thee would not increase our friendship, but to lend him was procuring a new friend, by conferring a new obligation."

Whether men, at the time I am now talking of, had more wit than at present, I will not take upon me to determine; but certain it is, they took more pains to show what they had. In that age a fellow of high humour would drink no wine but what was strained through his mistress's smock;[1]

[1] Major Richardson Pack, in his "Miscellanies" (second edi-

he would eat a pair of her shoes tossed up in a fricassee; he would swallow tallow candles instead of toasted cheese, and even run naked about town, as it was then said, to divert the ladies. In short, that was the age of such kind of wit as is the most distant of all others from wisdom.

Mr. Nash, as he sometimes played tricks with others, upon certain occasions received very severe retaliations. Being at York, and having lost all his money, some of his companions agreed to equip him with fifty guineas, upon this proviso, that he would stand at the great door of the minster in a blanket, as the people were coming out of church. To this proposal he readily agreed; but the dean passing by unfortunately knew him. "What!" cried the divine, "Mr. Nash in masquerade?" "Only a Yorkshire penance, Mr. Dean, for keeping bad company," says Nash, pointing to his companions.

Some time after this he won a wager of still greater consequence, by riding naked through a

tion), 1719, p. 185, tells of this practice as of "a piece of gallantry," among many others, which "Mr. Wycherley was once telling me they had in those days." Sir James Prior's modesty impelled him to print "chemise" instead of Goldsmith's (and Pack's) good English word "smock." — ED.

village upon a cow. This was then thought a harmless frolic; at present it would be looked upon with detestation.

He was once invited by some gentlemen of the navy on board a man-of-war, that had sailing orders for the Mediterranean. This was soon after the affair of the revels, and being ignorant of any design against him, he took his bottle with freedom. But he soon found, to use the expression then in fashion, that he was absolutely "bitten." The ship sailed away before he was aware of his situation, and he was obliged to make the voyage in the company where he had spent the night.

Many lives are often passed without a single adventure, and I do not know of any in the life of our hero that can be called such, except what we are now relating. During this voyage he was in an engagement, in which his particular friend was killed by his side, and he himself wounded in the leg. For the anecdote of his being wounded, we are solely to trust to his own veracity; but most of his acquaintance were not much inclined to believe him, when he boasted on those occasions. Telling one day of the wound he had received for his country, in one of the public rooms at Bath (Wiltshire's, if I don't forget), a lady of distinction

that sat by, said it was all false. "I protest, madam," replied he, "it is true; and if I cannot be believed, your ladyship may, if you please, receive farther information, and feel the ball in my leg."

Mr. Nash was now fairly for life entered into a new course of gaiety and dissipation, and steady in nothing but in pursuit of variety. He was thirty years old, without fortune, or useful talents to acquire one. He had hitherto only led a life of expedients; he thanked chance alone for his support; and having been long precariously supported, he became, at length, totally a stranger to prudence or precaution. Not to disguise any part of his character, he was now, by profession, a gamester, and went on from day to day, feeling the vicissitudes of rapture and anguish, in proportion to the fluctuations of fortune.

At this time London was the only theatre in England for pleasure or intrigue. A spirit of gaming had been introduced in the licentious age of Charles II., and had by this time thriven surprisingly. Yet all its devastations were confined to London alone. To this great mart of every folly, sharpers from every country daily arrived for the winter; but were obliged to leave the kingdom at the approach of summer, in order to

open a new campaign at Aix, Spa, or The Hague. Bath, Tunbridge, Scarborough, and other places of the same kind here, were then frequented only by such as really went for relief. The pleasures they afforded were merely rural; the company splenetic, rustic, and vulgar. In this situation of things, people of fashion had no agreeable summer retreat from the town, and usually spent that season amidst a solitude of country squires, parsons' wives, and visiting tenants, or farmers; they wanted some place where they might have each other's company, and win each other's money, as they had done during the winter in town.

To a person who does not thus calmly trace things to their source, nothing will appear more strange than how the healthy could ever consent to follow the sick to those places of spleen, and live with those whose disorders are ever apt to excite a gloom in the spectator. The truth is, the gaming-table was properly the salutary font to which such numbers flocked. Gaming will ever be the pleasure of the rich, while men continue to be men; while they fancy more happiness in being possessed of what they want, than they experience pleasure in the fruition of what they have. The wealthy only stake those riches which give no

real content, for an expectation of riches in which they hope for satisfaction. By this calculation they cannot lose happiness, as they begin with none; and they hope to gain it, by being possessed of something they have not had already.

Probably upon this principle, and by the arrival of Queen Anne there, for her health, about the year 1703,[1] the city of Bath became in some measure frequented by people of distinction. The company was numerous enough to form a country-dance upon the bowling-green; they were amused with a fiddle and hautboy, and diverted with the romantic walks around the city. They usually sauntered in fine weather in the grove, between two rows of sycamore-trees. Several learned

[1] Queen Anne visited Bath in 1702, "and was received with every mark of honour and distinction. One hundred young men of the city, uniformly clad and armed, and two hundred of its female inhabitants, dressed after the manner of Amazons, met the queen and her train on the borders of Somersetshire, and accompanied them (by a road cut for the occasion from the summit of Lansdown) to the western gate of the city. A prodigious inconvenience, however, was occasioned by this distinguished favour, to those who visited the city for the sake of its salutary waters; for such a tribe of idlers crowded to it in the retinue of the queen, and in consequence of the novelty of her visit, that the articles of life experienced a rise of one hundred per cent., and one guinea per night was paid by many for a bed" (R. Warner, "History of Bath," 1801, p. 209). — Ed.

physicians, Doctor Jordan and others, had even then praised the salubrity of the Wells, and the amusements were put under the direction of a master of the ceremonies.

Captain Webster was the predecessor of Mr. Nash. This I take to be the same gentleman whom Mr. Lucas describes in his history of the lives of the gamesters,[1] by which it appears that Bath, even before the arrival of Mr. Nash, was found a proper retreat for men of that profession. This gentleman, in the year 1704, carried the balls to the town hall, each man paying half a guinea each ball.

Still, however, the amusements of this place were neither elegant, nor conducted with delicacy. General society among people of rank or fortune was by no means established. The nobility still preserved a tincture of Gothic haughtiness, and refused to keep company with the gentry at any of the public entertainments of the place. Smoking in the rooms was permitted; gentlemen and ladies appeared in a disrespectful manner at public entertainments in aprons and boots. With an eagerness common to those whose pleasures come

[1] "Lives of the Gamesters," by Theophilus Lucas, London, 12mo, 1714. — Ed.

but seldom, they generally continued them too long, and thus they were rendered disgusting by too free an enjoyment. If the company liked each other, they danced till morning; if any person lost at cards, he insisted on continuing the game till luck should turn. The lodgings for visitants were paltry, though expensive; the dining-rooms, and other chambers, were floored with boards, coloured brown with soot and small-beer, to hide the dirt; the walls were covered with unpainted wainscot; the furniture corresponded with the meanness of the architecture; a few oak chairs, a small looking-glass, with a fender and tongs, composed the magnificence of these temporary habitations. The city was in itself mean and contemptible; no elegant buildings, no open streets, nor uniform squares. The pump-house was without any director; the chairmen permitted no gentlemen or ladies to walk home by night without insulting them; and to add to all this, one of the greatest physicians [1] of his age conceived a design of ruining the city, by writing against the efficacy of the waters. It was from a resentment of some affronts

[1] Doctor Radcliffe, some think. The toad story is also told of that physician in relation to a mineral spring at Astrop, Northamptonshire. — Ed.

he had received there, that he took this resolution; and accordingly published a pamphlet, by which he said "he would cast a toad into the spring."

In this situation of things it was that Mr. Nash first came into that city, and, hearing the threat of this physician, he humourously assured the people, that if they would give him leave, he would charm away the poison of the doctor's toad, as they usually charmed the venom of the tarantula, by music. He therefore was immediately empowered to set up the force of a band of music, against the poison of the doctor's reptile. The company very sensibly increased; Nash triumphed, and the sovereignty of the city was decreed to him by every rank of people.

We are now to behold this gentleman as arrived at a new dignity, for which nature seemed to have formed him: we are to see him directing pleasures, which none had better learned to share; placed over rebellious and refractory subjects, that were to be ruled only by the force of his address, and governing such as had been long accustomed to govern others. We see a kingdom beginning with him, and sending off Tunbridge as one of its colonies.

But to talk more simply, when we talk at best

of trifles. None could possibly conceive a person more fit to fill this employment than Nash. He had some wit, as I have said once or twice before, but it was of that sort which is rather happy than permanent. Once a week he might say a good thing; this the little ones about him took care to divulge, or, if they happened to forget the joke, he usually remembered to repeat it himself. In a long intercourse with the world he had acquired an impenetrable assurance; and the freedom with which he was received by the great furnished him with vivacity which could be commanded at any time, and which some mistook for wit. His former intercourse among people of fashion in town had let him into most of the characters of the nobility, and he was acquainted with many of their private intrigues. He understood rank and precedence with the utmost exactness; was fond of show and finery himself, and generally set a pattern of it to others. These were his favourite talents, and he was the favourite of such as had no other.

But to balance these which some may consider as foibles, he was charitable himself, and generally shamed his betters into a similitude of sentiment, if they were not naturally so before. He was

fond of advising those young men, who, by youth and too much money, are taught to look upon extravagance as a virtue. He was an enemy to rudeness in others, though in the latter part of his life he did not much seem to encourage a dislike of it by his own example. None talked with more humanity of the foibles of others, when absent, than he, nor kept those secrets with which he was entrusted more inviolably. But above all (if moralists will allow it among the number of his virtues), though he gamed high, he always played very fairly. These were his qualifications. Some of the nobility regarded him as an inoffensive, useful companion, the size of whose understanding was, in general, level with their own; but their little imitators admired him as a person of fine sense, and great good breeding. Thus people became fond of ranking him in the number of their acquaintance, told over his jests, and Beau Nash at length became the fashionable companion.

His first care when made master of the ceremonies, or King of Bath, as it is called, was to promote a music subscription, of one guinea each, for a band, which was to consist of six performers, who were to receive a guinea a week each for their trouble. He allowed also two guineas a week for

lighting and sweeping the rooms, for which he accounted to the subscribers by receipt.

The pump-house was immediately put under the care of an officer, by the name of the Pumper, for which he paid the corporation an annual rent. A row of new houses was begun on the south side of the gravel walks, before which a handsome pavement was then made for the company to walk on. Not less than seventeen or eighteen hundred pounds was raised this year, and in the beginning of 1706, by subscription, and laid out in repairing the roads near the city. The streets began to be better paved, cleaned, and lighted; the licenses of the chairmen were repressed, and by an act of Parliament procured on this occasion, the invalids, who came to drink or bathe, were exempted from all manner of toll, as often as they should go out of the city for recreation.

The houses and streets now began to improve, and ornaments were lavished upon them even to profusion. But in the midst of this splendour the company still were obliged to assemble in a booth to drink tea and chocolate, or to game. Mr. Nash undertook to remedy this inconvenience. By his direction, one Thomas Harrison erected a handsome Assembly-house for these purposes. A better

band of music was also procured, and the former subscription of one guinea was raised to two. Harrison had three guineas a week for the room and candles, and the music two guineas a man. The money Mr. Nash received and accounted for with the utmost exactness and punctuality. To this house were also added gardens for people of rank and fashion to walk in; and the beauty of the suburbs continued to increase, notwithstanding the opposition that was made by the corporation; who at that time looked upon every useful improvement, particularly without the walls, as dangerous to the inhabitants within.

His dominion was now extensive and secure, and he determined to support it with the strictest attention. But in order to proceed in everything like a king, he was resolved to give his subjects a law, and the following rules were accordingly put up in the pump-room:

RULES TO BE OBSERVED AT BATH.

1. That a visit of ceremony at first coming, and another at going away, are all that are expected or desired, by ladies of quality and fashion, — except impertinents.

2. That ladies coming to the ball appoint a time for their footmen coming to wait on them home, to

prevent disturbance and inconveniences to themselves and others.

3. That gentlemen of fashion never appearing in a morning before the ladies in gowns and caps show breeding and respect.

4. That no person take it ill that any one goes to another's play, or breakfast, and not theirs, — except captious by nature.

5. That no gentleman give his ticket for the balls to any but gentlewomen. — N. B. Unless he has none of his acquaintance.

6. That gentlemen crowding before the ladies at the ball show ill manners; and that none do so for the future, — except such as respect nobody but themselves.

7. That no gentleman or lady takes it ill that another dances before them, — except such as have no pretence to dance at all.

8. That the elder ladies and children be content with a second bench at the ball, as being past or not come to perfection.

9. That the younger ladies take notice how many eyes observe them. — N. B. This does not extend to the Have-at-alls.

10. That all whisperers of lies and scandal be taken for their authors.

11. That all repeaters of such lies and scandal be shun'd by all company, — except such as have been guilty of the same crime.

N. B. Several men of no character, old women and

young ones of questioned reputation, are great authors of lies in these places, being of the sect of levellers.[1]

These laws were written by Mr. Nash himself, and by the manner in which they are drawn up, he undoubtedly designed them for wit. The reader, however, it is feared, will think them dull. Poor Nash was not born a writer; for whatever humour he might have in conversation, he used to call a pen his torpedo: whenever he grasped it, it numbed all his faculties.

But were we to give laws to a nursery, we should make them childish laws; his statutes, though stupid, were addressed to fine gentlemen and ladies, and were probably received with sympathetic approbation. It is certain they were in general religiously observed by his subjects, and executed by him with impartiality; neither rank nor fortune shielded the refractory from his resentment.

The balls, by his directions, were to begin at six and to end at eleven. Nor would he suffer

[1] These rules appear verbatim in Warner's "History of Bath," where they are also said to have been the composition of Nash. We may here mention that most of the other particulars relative to Bath and Nash's connection therewith appearing in this biography are similarly vouched by that history, or by Wood's "Description of Bath," or Britton, or other authorities. — Ed.

them to continue a moment longer, lest invalids might commit irregularities, to counteract the benefit of the waters. Everything was to be performed in proper order. Each ball was to open with a minuet, danced by two persons of the highest distinction present. When the minuet concluded, the lady was to return to her seat, and Mr. Nash was to bring the gentleman a new partner. This ceremony was to be observed by every succeeding couple; every gentleman being obliged to dance with two ladies till the minuets were over, which generally continued two hours. At eight the country-dances were to begin, ladies of quality, according to their rank, standing up first. About nine o'clock a short interval was allowed for rest, and for the gentlemen to help their partners to tea. That over, the company were to pursue their amusements till the clock struck eleven. Then the master of the ceremonies, entering the ballroom, ordered the music to desist, by lifting up his finger. The dances discontinued, and some time allowed for becoming cool, the ladies were handed to their chairs.

Even the royal family themselves had not influence enough to make him deviate from any of these rules. The Princess Amelia once applying

to him for one dance more, after he had given the signal to withdraw, he assured her Royal Highness that the established rules of Bath resembled the laws of Lycurgus, which would admit of no alteration without an utter subversion of all his authority.

He was not less strict with regard to the dresses in which ladies and gentlemen were to appear. He had the strongest aversion to a white apron, and absolutely excluded all who ventured to appear at the assembly dressed in that manner. I have known him on a ball night strip even the Duchess of Q——,[1] and throw her apron at one of the hinder benches among the ladies' women, observing that none but abigails appeared in white aprons. This from another would be insult; in him it was considered as a just reprimand, and the good-natured duchess acquiesced in his censure,[2]

[1] Both Goldsmith's editions have dashes only. Prior has inserted "Queensbury," and no doubt Catharine Hyde, Duchess of Queensberry, is meant. She was a famous beauty and patroness of the wits of her time; *vide* Prior's "The Female Phaeton," commencing, "Thus Kitty, beautiful and young," Pope's and Swift's letters, etc. Britton writes that the apron which Nash threw into the back benches was "of point lace, worth five hundred guineas." — Ed.

[2] Not in the first edition, which probably accounts for the other editors having also omitted it. — Ed.

and with great good sense and good humour begged his Majesty's pardon.

But he found more difficulty in attacking the gentlemen's irregularities; and for some time strove, but in vain, to prohibit the use of swords. Disputes arising from love of [1] play were sometimes attended with fatal effects. To use his own expression, he was resolved to hinder people from doing "what they had no mind to;" but for some time without effect. However, there happened about that time a duel between two gamesters, whose names were Taylor and Clarke, which helped to promote his peaceable intentions. They fought by torchlight in the grove; Taylor was run through the body, but lived seven years after, at which time his wound breaking out afresh, it caused his death. Clarke from that time pretended to be a Quaker, but the orthodox brethren never cordially received him among their number; and he died at London about eighteen years after in poverty and contrition. From that time it was thought necessary to forbid the wearing of swords at Bath, as they often tore the ladies' clothes, and frighted them, by sometimes appearing upon

[1] In both the first and second editions we read "love or play," but no doubt "or" is a misprint for "of." — Ed.

trifling occasions. Whenever, therefore, Nash heard of a challenge given or accepted, he instantly had both parties arrested. The gentlemen's boots also made a very desperate stand against him; the country 'squires were by no means submissive to his usurpations, and probably his authority alone would never have carried him through, had he not reinforced it with ridicule. He wrote a song upon the occasion, which, for the honour of his poetical talents, the world shall see.

"FRONTINELLA'S INVITATION TO THE ASSEMBLY.

"Come, one and all, to *Hoyden* Hall,
For there's the assembly this night;
None but prude fools,
Mind manners and rules;
We *Hoydens* do decency slight.

"Come, Trollops and Slatterns,
Cockt hats and white aprons,
This best our modesty suits;
For why should not we,
In dress be as free,
As *Hogs-Norton* 'squires in boots."

The keenness, severity, and particularly the good rhymes of this little *morceau*, which was at that time highly relished by many of the nobility

at Bath, gained him a temporary triumph. But to push his victories, he got up a puppet-show, in which Punch came in booted and spurred, in the character of a country 'squire. He was introduced as courting his mistress, and having obtained her consent to comply with his wishes, upon going to bed, he is desired to pull off his boots. "My boots!" replies Punch, "why, madam, you may as well bid me pull off my legs. I never go without boots; I never ride, I never dance, without them, and this piece of politeness is quite the thing at Bath. We always dance at our town in boots, and the ladies often move minuets in riding-hoods." Thus he goes on, till his mistress, grown impatient, kicks him off the stage.

From that time, few ventured to be seen at the assemblies in Bath in a riding-dress; and whenever any gentleman, through ignorance or haste, appeared in the rooms in boots, Nash would make up to him, and, bowing in an arch manner, would tell him that he had "forgot his horse." Thus he was at last completely victorious.

"Dolisque coacti
Quos neque Tydides nec Larissæus Achilles
Non anni domûere decem."

He began, therefore, to reign without a rival, and, like other kings, had his mistresses, flatterers, enemies, and calumniators. The amusements of the place, however, wore a very different aspect from what they did formerly. Regularity repressed pride, and that lessened, people of fortune became fit for society. Let the morose and grave censure an attention to forms and ceremonies, and rail at those whose only business it is to regulate them; but, though ceremony is very different from politeness, no country was ever yet polite that was not first ceremonious. The natural gradation of breeding begins in savage disgust, proceeds to indifference, improves into attention, by degrees refines into ceremonious observance; and the trouble of being ceremonious at length produces politeness, elegance, and ease. There is, therefore, some merit in mending society, even in one of the inferior steps of this gradation; and no man was more happy in this respect than Mr. Nash. In every nation there are enough who have no other business or care but that of buying pleasure; and he taught them who bid at such an auction the art of procuring what they sought without diminishing the pleasure of others.

The city of Bath, by such assiduity, soon became

the theatre of summer amusements for all people of fashion; and the manner of spending the day there must amuse any but such as disease or spleen had made uneasy to themselves. The following is a faint picture of the pleasures that scene affords. Upon a stranger's arrival at Bath, he is welcomed by a peal of the abbey bells, and in the next place by the voice and music of the city waits. For these civilities, the ringers have generally a present made them of half a guinea, and the waits of half a crown, or more, in proportion to the person's fortune, generosity, or ostentation. These customs, though disagreeable, are however generally liked, or they would not continue. The greatest incommodity attending them is the disturbance the bells must give the sick. But the pleasure of knowing the name of every family that comes to town recompenses the inconvenience. Invalids are fond of news, and upon the first sound of the bells everybody sends out to inquire for whom they ring.[1]

[1] "No city, dear mother, this city excels
In charming sweet sounds both of fiddles and bells.
I thought, like a fool, that they only would ring
For a wedding, or judge, or the birth of a king;
But I found 'twas for me that the good-natur'd people
Rung so hard, that I thought they would pull down the steeple;

After the family is thus welcomed to Bath, it is the custom for the master of it to go to the public places, and subscribe two guineas at the assembly-houses toward the balls and music in the pump-house, for which he is entitled to three tickets every ball night. His next subscription is a crown, half a guinea, or a guinea, according to his rank and quality, for the liberty of walking in the private walks belonging to Simpson's assembly-house; a crown or half a guinea is also given to the booksellers, for which the gentleman is to have what books he pleases to read at his lodgings. And at the coffee-house another subscrip-

So I took out my purse, as I hate to be shabby,
And paid all the men when they came from the Abbey.
Yet some think it strange they should make such a riot,
In a place where sick folk would be glad to be quiet.

. . . . . .

If a broker or statesman, a gamester, or peer,
A nat'ralis'd Jew, or a bishop comes here;
Or an eminent trader in cheese should retire,
Just to think of the bus'ness the state may require,
With horns and with trumpets, with fiddles and drums,
They'll strive to divert him as soon as he comes:
'Tis amazing they find such a number of ways
Of employing his thoughts all the time that he stays!"

— *Anstey*, *New Bath Guide*, Letter V.

This popular satire and picture of Bath purports to have been drawn in 1766, four years after Goldsmith wrote. — ED.

tion is taken for pen, ink, and paper, for such letters as the subscriber shall write at it during his stay. The ladies, too, may subscribe to the booksellers and to a house by the pump-room, for the advantage of reading the news and for enjoying each other's conversation.

Things being thus adjusted, the amusements of the day are generally begun by bathing, which is no unpleasing method of passing away an hour or so.

The baths are five in number. On the southwest side of the abbey church is the king's bath, which is an oblong square; the walls are full of niches, and at every corner are steps to descend into it. This bath is said to contain 427 tons and fifty gallons of water; and on its rising out of the ground over the springs, it is sometimes too hot to be endured by those who bathe therein. Adjoining to the king's bath there is another, called the queen's bath. This is of a more temperate warmth, as borrowing its water from the other.

In the southwest part of the city are three other baths, viz.: the hot bath, which is not much inferior in heat to the king's bath, and contains fifty-three tons, two hogsheads, and eleven gallons of water; the cross bath, which contains fifty-two

tons, three hogsheads, and eleven gallons, and the leper's bath, which is not so much frequented as the rest. The king's bath (according to the best observations) will fill in about nine hours and a half, the hot bath in about eleven hours and a half, and the cross bath in about the same time.[1]

The hours for bathing are commonly between six and nine in the morning, and the baths are every morning supplied with fresh water; for when the people have done bathing, the sluices in each bath are pulled up, and the water is carried off by drains into the river Avon.

In the morning the lady is brought in a close chair, dressed in her bathing clothes, to the bath; and, being in the water, the woman who attends presents her with a little floating dish like a basin, into which the lady puts a handkerchief, a snuff-box, and a nosegay. She then traverses the bath; if a novice, with a guide, if otherwise, by herself; and having amused herself thus while she thinks proper, calls for her chair, and returns to her lodgings.

The amusement of bathing is immediately suc-

[1] These particulars are nearly the same in Warner, and no doubt in regard to them both Goldsmith and the later writer are mostly quoting from some guide-book of the time. — Ed.

ceeded by a general assembly of people at the pump-house, some for pleasure, and some to drink the hot waters. Three glasses, at three different times, is the usual portion for every drinker; and the intervals between every glass are enlivened by the harmony of a small band of music, as well as by the conversation of the gay, the witty, or the forward.[1]

[1] "In Tabitha's chamber I heard such a clatter,
I could not conceive what the deuce was the matter;
And, wou'd you believe it, I went up and found her
In a blanket, with two lusty fellows around her,
Who both seem'd a going to carry her off in
A little black box just the size of a coffin!

. . . . . .

'And pray,' says I, 'Tabitha, what is your drift,
To be cover'd in flannel instead of a shift?'"

Anstey, Letter VI.,

where the bathing is further described:

"How the ladies did giggle and set up their clacks,
All the while an old woman was rubbing their backs!

. . . . . .

'Twas a glorious sight to behold the fair sex
All wading with gentlemen up to their necks,
And view them so prettily tumble and sprawl
In a great smoking kettle as big as our hall."

Doctor Johnson was very severe upon the practice. Says Ozias Humphry, R. A., *vide* "Johnsoniana," at the end of Bohn's edition of Boswell, v. ix., p. 259: "When Mr. Johnson understood that I had lived some time at Bath, he asked me many

From the pump-house the ladies, from time to time, withdraw to a female coffee-house, and from thence return to their lodgings to breakfast. The gentlemen withdraw to their coffee-houses to read the papers, or converse on the news of the day with a freedom and ease not to be found in the metropolis.

People of fashion make public breakfasts at the assembly-houses, to which they invite their acquaintances, and they sometimes order private concerts, or, when so disposed, attend lectures on the arts and sciences, which are frequently taught there, in a pretty, superficial manner, so as not to tease the understanding, while they afford the imagination some amusement. The private concerts are performed in the ballrooms, the tickets a crown each.

Concert breakfasts at the assembly-house sometimes make also a part of the morning's amusement here, the expenses of which are defrayed by a subscription among the men. Persons of rank and fortune who can perform are admitted into

questions that led to a general description of it. He seemed very well pleased, but remarked that men and women bathing together, as they do at Bath, is an instance of barbarity that he believed could not be paralleled in any part of the world." Humphry wrote under the date 1764. — ED.

the orchestra, and find a pleasure in joining with the performers.

Thus we have the tedious morning fairly over. When noon approaches, and church (if any please to go there) is done, some of the company appear upon the parade, and other public walks, where they continue to chat and amuse each other, till they have formed parties for the play, cards, or dancing for the evening. Another part of the company divert themselves with reading in the booksellers' shops, or are generally seen tasting[1] the air and exercise, some on horseback, some in coaches. Some walk in the meadows around the town, winding along the side of the river Avon and the neighbouring canal; while others are seen scaling some of those romantic precipices that overhang the city.

When the hour of dinner draws nigh, and the company are returned from their different recreations, the provisions are generally served with the utmost elegance and plenty. Their mutton, butter, fish, and fowl are all allowed to be excellent, and their cookery still exceeds their meat.

After dinner is over, and evening prayers ended, the company meet a second time at the pump-

[1] The first edition has "taking the air," etc. — Ed.

house. From this they retire to the walks, and from thence go to drink tea at the assembly-houses, and the rest of the evenings are concluded either with balls, plays, or visits. A theatre was erected in the year 1705, by subscription, by people of the highest rank, who permitted their arms to be engraven on the inside of the house, as a public testimony of their liberality toward it. Every Tuesday and Friday evening is concluded with a public ball, the contributions to which are so numerous that the price of each ticket is trifling. Thus Bath yields a continued rotation of diversions, and people of all ways of thinking, even from the libertine to the methodist, have it in their power to complete the day with employments suited to their inclinations.

In this manner every amusement soon improved under Mr. Nash's administration. The magistrates of the city found that he was necessary and useful, and took every opportunity of paying the same respect to his fictitious royalty that is generally extorted by real power. The same satisfaction a young lady finds upon being singled out at her first appearance, or an applauded poet on the success of his first tragedy, influenced him. All admired him as an extraordinary character; and

some who knew no better, as a very fine gentleman. He was perfectly happy in their little applause, and affected at length something particular in his dress, behaviour, and conversation.

His equipage was sumptuous, and he usually travelled to Tunbridge in a post chariot and six grays, with outriders, footmen, French-horns, and every other appendage of expensive parade. He always wore a white hat; and, to apologise for this singularity, said he did it purely to secure it from being stolen; his dress was tawdry, though not perfectly genteel; he might be considered as a beau of several generations, and in his appearance he, in some measure, mixed the fashions of the last age with those of the present. He perfectly understood elegant expense, and generally passed his time in the very best company, if persons of the first distinction deserve that title.

But I hear the reader now demand, what finances were to support all this finery, or where the treasures that gave him such frequent opportunities of displaying his benevolence, or his vanity? To answer this, we must now enter upon another part of his character, — his talents as a gamester; for by gaming alone, at that period of which I speak, he kept up so very genteel an

appearance. When he first figured at Bath, there were few laws against this destructive amusement. The gaming-table was the constant resource of despair and indigence, and frequent ruin of opulent fortunes. Wherever people of fashion came, needy adventurers were generally found in waiting. With such Bath swarmed, and among this class Mr. Nash was certainly to be numbered in the beginning, only with this difference, that he wanted the corrupt heart, too commonly attending a life of expedients; for he was generous, humane, and honourable, even though by profession a gamester.

A thousand instances might be given of his integrity, even in this infamous profession, where his generosity often impelled him to act in contradiction to his interest. Wherever he found a novice in the hands of a sharper, he generally forewarned him of the danger; whenever he found any inclined to play, yet ignorant of the game, he would offer his services, and play for them. I remember an instance to this effect, though too nearly concerned in the affair to publish the gentleman's name of whom it is related. In the year 1725, there came to Bath a giddy youth, who had just resigned his fellowship at Oxford. He brought his whole fortune with him there; it was

but a trifle; however, he was resolved to venture it all. Good fortune seemed kinder than could be expected. Without the smallest skill in play, he won a sum sufficient to make any unambitious man happy. His desire of gain increasing with his gains, in the October following he was at all, and added four thousand pounds to his former capital. Mr. Nash, one night, after losing a considerable sum to this undeserving son of fortune, invited him to supper. "Sir," cried this honest, though veteran gamester, "perhaps you may imagine I have invited you, in order to have my revenge at home; but, sir, I scorn so inhospitable an action. I desired the favour of your company to give you some advice, which you will pardon me, sir, you seem to stand in need of. You are now high in spirits, and drawn away by a torrent of success; but there will come a time, when you will repent having left the calm of a college life for the turbulent profession of a gamester. Ill runs will come, as sure as day and night succeed each other. Be therefore advised, remain content with your present gains; for be persuaded, that had you the bank of England, with your present ignorance of gaming, it would vanish like a fairy dream. You are a stranger to me; but to con-

vince you of the part I take in your welfare, I'll give you fifty guineas, to forfeit twenty, every time you lose two hundred at one sitting." The young gentleman refused his offer, and was at last undone!

The late Duke of B.[1] being chagrined at losing a considerable sum, pressed Mr. Nash to tie him up for the future from playing deep. Accordingly, the beau gave his Grace a hundred guineas to forfeit ten thousand, whenever he lost a sum to the same amount at play, in one sitting. The duke loved play to distraction, and soon after, at hazard, lost eight thousand guineas, and was going to throw for three thousand more; when Nash, catching hold of the dice-box, entreated his Grace to reflect upon the penalty if he lost; the duke for that time desisted; but so strong was the furor of play upon him, that soon after, losing a considerable sum at Newmarket, he was contented to pay the penalty.[2]

[1] Supposed to be Charles Powlett, third Duke of Bolton. His second wife was Miss Lavinia Fenton, the actress, who was the original Polly, in Gay's "Beggar's Opera," produced at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre in 1728. The duke died in 1754. — Ed.

[2] The *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1732, p. 627, has a paragraph thus: "Feb. 9, 1732. A certain duke paid £5,000 to Beau

When the late Earl of T——d was a youth, he was passionately fond of play, and never better pleased than with having Mr. Nash for his antagonist. Nash saw with concern his lordship's foible, and undertook to cure him, though by a very disagreeable remedy. Conscious of his own superior skill, he determined to engage him in single play for a very considerable sum. His lordship, in proportion as he lost his game, lost his temper too; and as he approached the gulf, seemed still more eager for ruin. He lost his estate; some writings were put into the winner's possession; his very equipage was deposited as a last stake, and he lost that also. But, when our generous gamester had found his lordship sufficiently punished for his temerity, he returned all; only stipulating that he should be paid five thousand pounds whenever he should think proper to make the demand. However, he never made any such demand during his lordship's life; but some time after his decease, Mr. Nash's affairs being in the wane, he demanded the money of his lordship's

Nash, and agreed to allow him £400 per annum during life, in lieu of £10,000 he was to pay, in case the said nobleman should lose at hazard above £2,000 at one sitting; which he did in October last at Newmarket." — ED.

heirs, who honourably paid it without any hesitation.

But whatever skill Nash might have acquired by long practice in play, he was never formed by nature for a successful gamester. He was constitutionally passionate and generous. To acquire a perfection in that art, a man must be naturally phlegmatic, reserved, and cool; every passion must learn to obey control: but he frequently was unable to restrain the violence of his, and was often betrayed by this means into unbecoming rudeness, or childish impertinence; was sometimes a minion of fortune, and as often depressed by adversity. While others made considerable fortunes at the gaming-table, he was ever in the power of chance; nor did even the intimacy with which he was received by the great, place him in a state of independence.

The considerable inconveniences that were found to result from a permission of gaming, at length attracted the attention of the legislature, and in the twelfth year of his late Majesty [1] the most prevalent games at that time were declared fraudulent and unlawful. Every age has had its peculiar modes of gaming. The games of gleek,

[1] George II.; the twelfth year of his reign was 1739. — Ed.

primero, in-and-in, and several others now exploded, employed our sharping ancestors; to these succeeded the ace of hearts, pharaoh, basset, and hazard, all games of chance like the former. But though in these the chances seemed equal to the novice, in general those who kept the bank were considerable winners. The act, therefore, passed upon this occasion, declared all such games and lotteries illicit, and directed, that all who should set up such games should forfeit two hundred pounds, to be levied by distress on the offender's goods; one third to go to the informer, the residue to the poor.[1] The act further declared that every person who played in any place, except in the royal palace where his Majesty resided, should forfeit fifty pounds, and should be condemned to pay treble costs in case of an appeal.

This law was scarcely made before it was eluded by the invention of divers fraudulent and deceitful games; and a particular game, called passage, was daily practised, and contributed to the ruin of thousands. To prevent this, the ensuing year it was enacted that this and every other game invented, or to be invented, with one die, or more, or any other instrument of the same nature, with

[1] 12 Geo. II., ch. 28. — Ed.

numbers thereon, should be subject to a similar penalty; and at the same time the persons playing with such instruments should be punished as above.

This amendment of the law soon gave birth to new evasions; the game of rolly-polly, Marlborough's Battles, but particularly the E O, were set up; and, strange to observe, several of those very noblemen who had given their voices to suppress gaming were the most ready to encourage it. This game was at first set up at Tunbridge. It was invented by one C——k,[1] and carried on between him and one Mr. A——e, the proprietor of the assembly-room at that place, and was reckoned extremely profitable to the bank, as it gained two and a half per cent. on all that was lost or won.

As all gaming was suppressed but this, Nash was now utterly destitute of any resource that he could expect from his superior skill and long experience in the art. The money to be gained in private gaming is at best but trifling, and the opportunity precarious. The minds of the generality of mankind shrink with their circumstances;

[1] So in editions first and second. Prior printed the name "Cook." — Ed.

and Nash, upon the immediate prospect of poverty, was now mean enough (I will call it no worse) to enter into a base confederacy with those low creatures to evade the law, and to share the plunder. The occasion was as follows. The profits of the table were, as I observed, divided between C——k, the inventor, and A——e, the room-keeper. The first year's profits were extraordinary, and A——e, the room-keeper, now began to wish himself sole proprietor. The combinations of the worthless are ever of short duration. The next year, therefore, A——e turned C——k out of his room, and set up the game for himself. The gentlemen and ladies who frequented the wells, unmindful of the immense profit gained by these reptiles, still continued to game as before; and A——e was triumphing in the success of his politics, when he was informed that C——k and his friends had hired the crier to cry the game down. The consequences of this would have been fatal to A——e's interest; for by this means frauds might have been discovered, which would deter even the most ardent lovers of play. Immediately, therefore, while the crier was yet upon the walks, he applied to Mr. Nash to stop these proceedings, and at the same time offered him a

fourth share of the bank, which Mr. Nash was mean enough to accept. This is the greatest blot in his life; and this, it is hoped, will find pardon.

The day after, the inventor offered a half of the bank; but this Mr. Nash thought proper to refuse, being preëngaged to A——e. Upon which, being disappointed, he applied to one Mr. J——e, and under his protection another table was set up, and the company seemed to be divided equally between them. I cannot reflect without surprise at the folly of the gentlemen and ladies, to suffer themselves to be thus parcelled out between a pack of sharpers, and permit themselves to be defrauded, without even the show of opposition. The company thus divided, Mr. Nash once more availed himself of their parties, and prevailed upon them to unite their banks, and to divide the gains into three shares, of which he reserved one to himself.

Nash had hitherto enjoyed a fluctuating fortune, and had he taken the advantage of the present opportunity, he might have been for the future not only above want, but even in circumstances of opulence. Had he cautiously employed himself in computing the benefits of the table, and exacting his stipulated share, he might have soon grown rich; but

he entirely left the management of it to the people of the rooms. He took them (as he says in one of his memorials upon this occasion[1]) to be honest, and never inquired what was won or lost; and it is probable they were seldom assiduous in informing him. I find a secret pleasure in thus displaying the insecurity of friendships among the base. They pretended to pay him regularly at first, but he soon discovered, as he says, that at Tunbridge he had suffered to the amount of two thousand guineas.

In the meantime, as the E O table thus succeeded at Tunbridge, Mr. Nash was resolved to introduce it at Bath, and previously asked the opinion of several lawyers, who declared it no way illegal. In consequence of this, he wrote to Mrs. A——e, who kept one of the great rooms at Bath, acquainting her with the profits attending such a scheme, and proposing to have a fourth share with her and Mr. W——, the proprietor of the other room, for his authority and protection. To this Mr. W—— and she returned him for answer that they would grant him a fifth share; which he consented to accept. Accordingly, he made a journey to London and bespoke two tables, one for

[1] At p. 60. — Ed.

each room, at the rate of fifteen pounds each table.

The tables were no sooner set up at Bath, than they were frequented by a greater concourse of gamesters than those at Tunbridge. Men of that infamous profession, from every part of the kingdom, and even other parts of Europe, flocked here to feed on the ruins of each other's fortune. This afforded another opportunity for Mr. Nash to become rich; but, as at Tunbridge, he thought the people here also would take care of him, and therefore he employed none to look after his interest. The first year they paid him what he thought just; the next, the woman of the room dying, her son paid him, and showed his books. Some time after the people of the rooms offered him one hundred pounds a year each for his share, which he refused; every succeeding year they continued to pay him less and less, till at length he found, as he pretends, that he had thus lost not less than twenty thousand pounds.

Thus they proceeded, deceiving the public and each other, until the legislature thought proper to suppress these seminaries of vice. It was enacted, that after the 24th of June, 1745, none should be permitted to keep a house, room, or

place, for playing, upon pain of such forfeitures as were declared in former acts instituted for that purpose.

The legislature likewise amended a law, made in the reign of Queen Anne, for recovering money lost at play, on the oath of the winner. By this act, no person was rendered incapable of being a witness; and every person present at a gaming-table might be summoned by the magistrate who took cognisance of the affair. No privilege of Parliament was allowed to those convicted of having gaming-tables in their houses. Those who lost ten pounds at one time were liable to be indicted within six months after the offence was committed; and, being convicted, were to be fined five times the value of the sum won or lost, for the use of the poor. Any offender, before conviction, discovering another, so as to be convicted, was to be discharged from the penalties incurred by his own offences.

By this wise and just act, all Nash's future hopes of succeeding by the tables were blown up. He had now only the justice and generosity of his confederates to trust to; but that he soon found to be a vain expectation, for, if we can depend on his own memorials, what at one time they confessed

they would at another deny, and though upon some occasions they seemed at variance with each other, yet when they were to oppose him, whom they considered as a common enemy, they generally united with confidence and success. He now, therefore, had nothing but a lawsuit to confide in for redress; and this is ever the last expedient to retrieve a desperate fortune. He accordingly threw his suit into Chancery, and by this means the public became acquainted with what he had long endeavoured to conceal. They now found that he was himself concerned in the gaming-tables, of which he only seemed the conductor, and that he had shared part of the spoil, though he complained of having been defrauded of a just share.

The success of his suit was what might have been naturally expected; he had but at best a bad cause, and as the oaths of the defendants were alone sufficient to cast him in Chancery, it was not surprising that he was nonsuited. But the consequence of this affair was much more fatal than he had imagined: it lessened him in the esteem of the public; it drew several enemies against him, and in some measure diminished the authority of any defence he could make. From

that time (about the year 1745) I find this poor, good-natured, but misguided man involved in continual disputes, every day calumniated with some new slander, and continually endeavouring to obviate its effects.

Upon these occasions his usual method was by printed bills handed about among his acquaintance, to inform the public of his most private transactions with some of those creatures with whom he had formerly associated; but these apologies served rather to blacken his antagonists than to vindicate him. They were in general extremely ill-written, confused, obscure, and sometimes unintelligible. By these, however, it appeared that W——[1] was originally obliged to him for the resort of company to his room; that Lady H——, who had all the company before W——'s room was built, offered Mr. Nash one hundred pounds for his protection, which he refused, hav-

[1] Prior prints the name "Willshire," but both Goldsmith's editions have "W——." "Wiltshire" also appears in other passages attached by Goldsmith to apparently the same room, — as at p. 66. Warner (p. 349) says that the second Assembly Room [Harrison's, established 1708, was the first], the room built by Thayer in 1728, "the large room on the walks, now [1800] used as a warehouse for cabinet goods," was successively called Linsday's and Wiltshire's room. — ED.

ing previously promised to support Mrs. W——. It appears by these apologies that the persons concerned in the rooms made large fortunes, while Nash [1] still continued in pristine indigence, and that his nephew, for whom he had at first secured one of the rooms, was left in as great distress as he.

His enemies were not upon this occasion contented with aspersing him as a confederate with sharpers; they even asserted that he spent and embezzled the subscriptions of gentlemen and ladies, which were given for useful or charitable purposes. But to such aspersions he answered by declaring, to use his own expression, before God and man that he never diverted one shilling of the said subscriptions to his own use; nor was he ever thought to have done it till new enemies started up against him. Perhaps the reader may be curious to see one of these memorials, written by himself, and I will indulge his curiosity, merely to show a specimen of the style and manner of a man whose whole life was passed in a round of gaiety and conversation, whose jests were a thousand times repeated, and whose company was courted by every son and daughter of fashion.

[1] First and second editions have "he." — Ed.

The following is particularly levelled against those who, in the latter part of his life, took every opportunity to traduce his character.

"A MONITOR.

"*For the Lord hateth lying and deceitful lips.* — PSAL.

"The curse denounced in my motto, is sufficient to intimidate any person, who is not quite abandoned in their evil ways, and who have any fear of God before their eyes; everlasting burnings are a terrible reward for their misdoings; and nothing but the most hardened sinners will oppose the judgments of heaven, being without end. This reflection must be shocking to such, as are conscious to themselves, of having erred from the sacred dictates of the Psalmist, and who following the blind impulse of passion, daily forging lies and deceit, to annoy their neighbour. But there are joys in heaven which they can never arrive at, whose whole study is to destroy the peace and harmony, and good order of society, in this place."

This carries little of the air of a bagatelle. It rather seems a sermon in miniature, so different are some men in the closet and in conversation. The following I have taken from a heap of other memorials, all tending to set his combination with the afore-mentioned partners in a proper light.

"E O was first set up in A——e room, the profits divided between one C——k (the inventor of the game) and A——e.

"The next year A——e, finding the game so advantageous, turned C——k out of his room, and set the game up himself; but C——k and his friends hired the crier to cry the game down; upon which A——e came running to me to stop it, after he had cried it once, which I immediately did, and turned the crier off the walks.

"Then A——e asked me to go a fourth with him in the bank, which I consented to; C——k next day took me into his room which he had hired, and proffered me to go half with him, which I refused, being engaged before to A——e.

"J——e then set up the same game, and complained that he had not half play at his room; upon which I made them agree to join their banks, and divide equally the gain and loss, and I to go the like share in the bank.

"I taking them to be honest, never inquired what was won or lost; and thought they paid me honestly, 'till it was discovered, that they had defrauded me of 2000 guineas.

"I then arrested A——e, who told me I must go into Chancery, and that I should begin with the people of Bath, who had cheated me of ten times as much; and told my attorney that J——e had cheated me of 500, and wrote me word that I probably had it not under his hand, which never was used in play.

"Upon my arresting A——e, I received a letter not to prosecute J——e, for he would be a very good witness. I writ a discharge to J——e for £125 in full, though he never paid me a farthing, upon his telling me if his debts were paid he was not worth a shilling.

"Every article of this I can prove from A——e's own mouth, as a reason that he allowed the bank keepers but ten per cent., because I went twenty; and his suborning ——— to alter his information.

"RICHARD NASH."[1]

This gentleman's simplicity, in trusting persons whom he had no previous reasons to place confidence in, seems to be one of those lights into his character, which, while they impeach his understanding, do honour to his benevolence. The low and timid are ever suspicious; but a heart impressed with honourable sentiments expects from others sympathetic sincerity.

But now that we have viewed his conduct as a gamester, and seen him on that side of his character which is by far the most unfavourable, seen him declining from his former favour and esteem, the just consequence of his quitting, though but ever so little, the paths of honour; let me turn to

[1] All this, from "Perhaps the reader," is omitted by Prior, though it appears in both Goldsmith's editions. — ED.

those brighter parts of his character which gained the affection of his friends, the esteem of the corporation which he assisted, and may possibly attract the attention of posterity. By his successes we shall find, that figuring in life proceeds less from the possession of great talents than from the proper application of moderate ones. Some great minds are only fitted to put forth their powers in the storm, and the occasion is often wanting during a whole life for a great exertion; but trifling opportunities of shining are almost every hour offered to the little sedulous mind; and a person thus employed is not only more pleasing, but more useful in a state of tranquil society.

Though gaming first introduced him into polite company, this alone could hardly have carried him forward, without the assistance of a genteel address, much vivacity, some humour, and some wit. But, once admitted into the circle of the *beau monde*, he then laid claim to all the privileges by which it is distinguished. Among others, in the early part of his life, he entered himself professedly into the service of the fair sex; he set up for a man of gallantry and intrigue, and, if we can credit the boasts of his old age, he often suc-

ceeded. In fact, the business of love somewhat resembles the business of physic; no matter for qualifications, he that makes vigorous pretensions to either is surest of success. Nature had by no means formed Mr. Nash for a *beau garçon;* his person was clumsy, too large and awkward, and his features harsh, strong, and peculiarly irregular; yet even with those disadvantages, he made love, became an universal admirer of the sex, and was universally admired. He was possessed, at least, of some requisites of a lover. He had assiduity, flattery, fine clothes, and as much wit as the ladies he addressed. Wit, flattery, and fine clothes, he used to say, were enough to debauch a nunnery. But my fair readers of the present day are exempt from this scandal; and it is no matter now, what he said of their grandmothers.

As Nestor was a man of three ages, so Nash sometimes humourously called himself a beau of three generations. He had seen flaxen bobs succeeded by majors, which in their turn gave way to negligents, which were at last totally routed by bags and ramilies. The manners in which gentlemen managed their amours, in these different ages of fashion, were not more different than their periwigs. The lover in the reign of King Charles was

solemn, majestic, and formal. He visited his mistress in state; languished for the favour, kneeled when he toasted his goddess, walked with solemnity, performed the most trifling things with decorum, and even took snuff with a flourish. The beau of the latter part of Queen Anne's reign was disgusted with so much formality; he was pert, smart, and lively; his billets-doux were written in a quite different style from that of his antiquated predecessor; he was ever laughing at his own ridiculous situation, till at last, he persuaded the lady to become as ridiculous as himself. The beau of the third age, in which Mr. Nash died, was still more extraordinary than either; his whole secret in intrigue consisted in perfect indifference. The only way to make love now, I have heard Mr. Nash say, was to take no manner of notice of the lady; which method was found the surest way to secure her affections.[1]

[1] Goldsmith's Beau Tibbs expresses a similar opinion, "Citizen of the World," Letter liv. Mr. Forster had a theory that the character of Beau Tibbs was to some extent built upon the character here given of Beau Nash. But to suppose this we must assume that Goldsmith had the latter in his mind two years before, viz., in 1760, the date of Beau Tibbs in the Chinese Letters of the *Public Ledger*, when Nash was still living, and when, of course, Goldsmith had not access to the "papers," etc., on which this "Life" is no doubt mainly founded. — Ed.

However these things be, this gentleman's successes in amour were in reality very much confined in the second and third age of intrigue; his character was too public for a lady to consign her reputation to his keeping. But in the beginning of life, it is said, he knew the secret history of the times, and contributed himself to swell the page of scandal. Were I upon the present occasion to hold the pen of a novelist, I could recount some amours in which he was successful. I could fill a volume with little anecdotes which contain neither pleasure nor instruction; with histories of professing lovers, and poor believing girls deceived by such professions. But such adventures are easily written, and as easily achieved. The plan even of fictitious novel is quite exhausted; but truth, which I have followed here, and ever design to follow, presents in the affair of love scarce any variety. The manner in which one reputation is lost exactly resembles that by which another is taken away. The gentleman begins at timid distance, grows more bold, becomes rude, till the lady is married or undone; such is the substance of every modern novel; nor will I gratify the pruriency of folly at the expense of every other pleasure my narration may afford.

Mr. Nash did not long continue a universal gallant, but in the earlier years of his reign entirely gave up his endeavours to deceive the sex, in order to become the honest protector of their innocence, the guardian of their reputation, and a friend to their virtue. This was a character he bore for many years, and supported it with integrity, assiduity, and success. It was his constant practice to do everything in his power to prevent the fatal consequences of rash and inconsiderate love; and there are many persons now alive who owe their present happiness to his having interrupted the progress of an amour that threatened to become unhappy, or even criminal, by privately making their guardians or parents acquainted with what he could discover.[1] And his manner of disconcerting these schemes was such as generally secured him from the rage and resentment of the disappointed. One night when I was in Wilt-

[1] "Long reigned the great Nash, this omnipotent lord,
Respected by youth, and by parents ador'd;
For him not enough at a ball to preside,
The unwary and beautiful nymph would he guide;
Oft tell her a tale, how the credulous maid,
By man, by perfidious man, is betray'd;
Taught charity's hand to relieve the distrest,
While tears have his tender compassion exprest."

— *Anstey*, Letter xi. — ED.

Beau Nash

Engraved by W. Greatback after painting by Thomas Hudson

shire's room, Nash came up to a lady and her daughter, who were people of no inconsiderable fortune, and bluntly told the mother she had better be at home; this was at that time thought an audacious piece of impertinence, and the lady turned away piqued and disconcerted. Nash, however, pursued her, and repeated the words again; when the old lady, wisely conceiving there might be some hidden meaning couched under this seeming insolence, retired, and coming to her lodgings, found a coach and six at the door, which a sharper had provided to carry off her eldest daughter.[1]

I shall beg leave to give some instances of Mr. Nash's good sense[2] and good nature on these occasions, as I have had the accounts from himself. At the conclusion of the treaty of peace at Utrecht, Colonel M. was one of the thoughtless, agreeable, gay creatures that drew the attention of the company at Bath. He danced and talked with great vivacity, and when he gamed among the ladies, he showed that his attention was employed rather upon their hearts than their fortunes.

[1] This story is not in the first edition; and Prior also omits it. It will be noticed that Goldsmith here writes "Wiltshire's room," without the dashes. — ED.

[2] "Good sense" is not in the first edition. — ED.

His own fortune, however, was a trifle, when compared with the elegance of his expense; and his imprudence at last was so great that it obliged him to sell an annuity, arising from his commission, to keep up his splendour a little longer.

However thoughtless he might be, he had the happiness of gaining the affections of Miss L., whose father designed her a very large fortune. This lady was courted by a nobleman of distinction, but she refused his addresses, resolved upon gratifying rather her inclinations than her avarice. The intrigue went on successfully between her and the colonel, and they both would certainly have been married and been undone, had not Mr. Nash apprised her father of their intentions. The old gentleman recalled his daughter from Bath, and offered Mr. Nash a very considerable present for the care he had taken, which he refused.

In the meantime Colonel M. had an intimation how his intrigue came to be discovered; and by taxing Mr. Nash found his suspicions were not without foundation. A challenge was the immediate consequence, which the king of Bath, conscious of having only done his duty, thought proper to decline. As none are permitted to wear swords at Bath, the colonel found no oppor-

tunity of gratifying his resentment, and waited with impatience to find Mr. Nash in town to require proper satisfaction.

During this interval, however, he found his creditors become too importunate for him to remain longer at Bath; and his finances and credit being quite exhausted, he took the desperate resolution of going over to the Dutch army in Flanders, where he enlisted himself a volunteer. Here he underwent all the fatigues of a private sentinel, with the additional misery of receiving no pay, and his friends in England gave out that he was shot at the battle of ———.

In the meantime, the nobleman pressed his passion with ardour; but during the progress of his amour, the young lady's father died, and left her heiress to a fortune of fifteen hundred a year. She thought herself now disengaged from her former passion. An absence of two years had in some measure abated her love for the colonel, and the assiduity, the merit, and real regard of the gentleman who still continued to solicit her, were almost too powerful for her constancy. Mr. Nash, in the meantime, took every opportunity of inquiring after Colonel M., and found that he had for some time been returned to

England, but had changed his name, in order to avoid the fury of his creditors, and that he was entered into a company of strolling players, who were at that time exhibiting at Peterborough.

He now therefore thought he owed the colonel, in justice, an opportunity of promoting his fortune, as he had once deprived him of an occasion of satisfying his love. Our Beau therefore invited the lady to be of a party to Peterborough, and offered his own equipage, which was then one of the most elegant in England, to conduct her there. The proposal being accepted, the lady, the nobleman, and Nash arrived in town just as the players were going to begin.

Colonel M., who used every means of remaining incognito, and who was too proud to make his distresses known to any of his former acquaintance, was now degraded into the character of Tom in the "Conscious Lovers." Miss L. was placed in the foremost row of the spectators, her lord on one side, and the impatient Nash on the other, when the unhappy youth appeared in that despicable situation upon the stage. The moment he came on, his former mistress struck his view; but his amazement was increased when he saw her fainting away in the arms of those who sat behind her.

He was incapable of proceeding, and scarce knowing what he did, he flew and caught her in his arms.

"Colonel," cried Nash, when they were in some measure recovered, "you once thought me your enemy, because I endeavoured to prevent you both from ruining each other; you were then wrong, and you have long had my forgiveness. If you love well enough now for matrimony, you fairly have my consent, and d——n him, say I, that attempts to part you." Their nuptials were solemnised soon after, and affluence added a zest to all their future enjoyments. Mr. Nash had the thanks of each, and he afterward spent several agreeable days in that society which he had contributed to render happy.

I shall beg the reader's patience, while I give another instance, in which he ineffectually offered his assistance and advice. This story is not from himself, but told us partly by Mr. Wood, the architect of Bath,[1] as it fell particularly within his own knowledge, and partly from another memoir to which he refers.

[1] See Wood's "Description of Bath," vol. ii. p. 446. The lady's real name was Fanny Braddock. She was a daughter of General Braddock. See *Gentleman's Magazine*, September, 1731, p. 397. — Ed.

Miss Sylvia S—— was descended from one of the best families in the kingdom, and was left a large fortune upon her sister's decease. She had early in life been introduced into the best company, and contracted a passion for elegance and expense. It is usual to make the heroine of a story very witty and very beautiful, and such circumstances are so surely expected, that they are scarce attended to. But whatever the finest poet could conceive of wit, or the most celebrated painter imagine of beauty, were excelled in the perfections of this young lady. Her superiority in both was allowed by all who either heard or had seen her. She was naturally gay, generous to a fault, good-natured to the highest degree, affable in conversation, and some of her letters and other writings, as well in verse as prose, would have shone amongst those of the most celebrated wits of this, or any other age, had they been published.

But these great qualifications were marked by another which lessened the value of them all. She was imprudent! But let it not be imagined that her reputation or honour suffered by her imprudence: I only mean, she had no knowledge of the use of money; she relieved distress by

putting herself into the circumstances of the object whose wants she supplied.

She was arrived at the age of nineteen, when the crowd of her lovers and the continual repetition of new flattery had taught her to think she could never be forsaken, and never poor. Young ladies are apt to expect a certainty of success from a number of lovers; and yet I have seldom seen a girl courted by a hundred lovers that found a husband in any. Before the choice is fixed, she has either lost her reputation or her good sense; and the loss of either is sufficient to consign her to perpetual virginity.

Among the number of this young lady's lovers was the celebrated S——, who, at that time, went by the name of "the good-natured man."[1] This gentleman, with talents that might have done honour to humanity, suffered himself to fall at length into the lowest state of debasement. He followed the dictates of every newest passion; his love, his pity, his generosity, and even his friendships were all in excess; he was unable to make head against any of his sensations or desires,

[1] Possibly some of the traits of this character were in Goldsmith's mind when he drew Honeywood, the hero of his comedy "The Good-Natured Man." — ED.

but they were in general worthy wishes and desires, for he was constitutionally virtuous. This gentleman, who at last died in a gaol, was at that time this lady's envied favourite.

It is probable that he, thoughtless creature, had no other prospect from this amour but that of passing the present moments agreeably. He only courted dissipation, but the lady's thoughts were fixed on happiness. At length, however, his debts amounting to a considerable sum, he was arrested and thrown into prison. He endeavoured at first to conceal his situation from his beautiful mistress; but she soon came to a knowledge of his distress, and took the fatal resolution of freeing him from confinement by discharging all the demands of his creditors.

Mr. Nash was at that time in London, and represented to the thoughtless young lady that such a measure would effectually ruin both; that so warm a concern for the interests of Mr. S—— would in the first place quite impair her fortune in the eyes of our sex, and, what was worse, lessen her reputation in those of her own. He added, that thus bringing Mr. S—— from prison would be only a temporary relief; that a mind so generous as his would become bankrupt under the load of grati-

tude, and instead of improving in friendship or affection, he would only study to avoid a creditor he could never repay; that though small favours produce good-will, great ones destroy friendship. These admonitions, however, were disregarded, and she too late found the prudence and truth of her adviser. In short, her fortune was by this means exhausted; and, with all her attractions, she found her acquaintance began to disesteem her in proportion as she became poor.

In this situation she accepted Mr. Nash's invitation of returning to Bath. He promised to introduce her to the best company there, and he was assured that her merit would do the rest. Upon her very first appearance, ladies of the highest distinction courted her friendship and esteem; but a settled melancholy had taken possession of her mind, and no amusements that they could propose were sufficient to divert it. Yet still, as if from habit, she followed the crowd in its levities, and frequented those places where all persons endeavour to forget themselves in the bustle of ceremony and show.

Her beauty, her simplicity, and her unguarded situation soon drew the attention of a designing wretch, who at that time kept one of the rooms

at Bath, and who thought that this lady's merit, properly managed, might turn to good account. This woman's name was Dame Lindsey,[1] a creature who, though vicious, was in appearance sanctified, and, though designing, had some wit and humour. She began by the humblest assiduity to ingratiate herself with Miss S——; showed that she could be amusing as a companion, and, by frequent offers of money, proved that she could be useful as a friend. Thus by degrees she gained an entire ascendant over this poor, thoughtless, deserted girl; and in less than a year, namely about 1727, Miss S——, without ever transgressing the laws of virtue, had entirely lost her reputation. Whenever a person was wanting to make up a party for play at Dame Lindsey's, Sylvia, as she was then familiarly called, was sent for, and was obliged to suffer all those slights which the rich but too often let fall upon their inferiors in point of fortune.

In most, even the greatest, minds, the heart at last becomes level with the meanness of its condition; but in this charming girl, it struggled hard with adversity, and yielded to every encroachment of contempt with sullen reluctance. But though

[1] See note, p. 57, *ante*. — Ed.

in the course of three years she was in the very eye of public inspection, yet Mr. Wood, the architect, avers, that he could never, by the strictest observations, perceive her to be tainted with any other vice than that of suffering herself to be decoyed to the gaming-table, and at her own hazard playing for the amusement and advantage of others. Her friend, Mr. Nash, therefore, thought proper to induce her to break off all connections with Dame Lindsey, and to rent part of Mr. Wood's house, in Queen Square,[1] where she behaved with the utmost complaisance, regularity, and virtue.

In this situation, her detestation of life still continued. She found that time would infallibly deprive her of part of her attractions, and that continual solicitude would impair the rest. With these reflections she would frequently entertain herself and an old faithful maid in the vales of Bath, whenever the weather would permit them to walk out. She would even sometimes start questions in company, with seeming unconcern, in order to know what act of suicide was easiest, and

[1] No. 24, Queen Square, "the centre house on the north side," according to Mr. Peach, in his lately published "Historic Houses in Bath." — ED.

which was attended with the smallest pain. When tired with exercise, she generally retired to meditation, and she became habituated to early hours of sleep and rest ; but when the weather prevented her usual exercise, and her sleep was thus more difficult, she made it a rule to rise from her bed and walk about her chamber, till she began to find an inclination for repose.

This custom made it necessary for her to order a burning candle to be kept all night in her room ; and the maid usually, when she withdrew, locked the chamber door, and pushing the key under it beyond reach, her mistress, by that constant method, lay undisturbed till seven o'clock in the morning, when she arose, unlocked the door, and rang the bell as a signal for the maid to return.

This state of seeming piety, regularity, and prudence continued for some time, till the gay, celebrated, toasted Miss Sylvia was sunk into a housekeeper to the gentleman at whose house she lived. She was unable to keep company, for want of the elegancies of dress that are the usual passports among the polite ; and was too haughty to seem to want them. The fashionable, the amusing, and the polite in society now seldom visited her ; and from being once the object of every eye,

she was now deserted by all, and preyed upon by the bitter reflections of her own imprudence.

Mr. Wood and part of his family were gone to London. Miss Sylvia was left with the rest as a governess at Bath. She sometimes saw Mr. Nash, and acknowledged the friendship of his admonitions, though she refused to accept any other marks of his generosity than that of advice. Upon the close of the day in which Mr. Wood was expected to return from London, she expressed some uneasiness at the disappointment of not seeing him; took particular care to settle the affairs of his family; and then, as usual, sat down to meditation. She now cast a retrospect over her past misconduct, and her approaching misery. She saw that even affluence gave her no real happiness, and from indigence she thought nothing could be hoped but lingering calamity. She at length conceived the fatal resolution of leaving a life in which she could see no corner for comfort, and terminating a scene of imprudence in suicide.

Thus resolved, she sat down at her dining-room window, and with cool intrepidity wrote the following lines on one of the panes of the window:

"O Death, thou pleasing end of human woe!
Thou cure for life! thou greatest good below!

Still may'st thou fly the coward and the slave,
And thy soft slumbers only bless the brave." [1]

She then went into company with the most cheerful serenity ; talked of indifferent subjects till supper, which she ordered to be got ready in a little library belonging to the family. There she spent the remaining hours preceding bedtime in dandling two of Mr. Wood's children on her knees. In retiring from thence to her chamber, she went into the nursery to take her leave of another child as it lay sleeping in the cradle. Struck with the innocence of the little babe's looks, and the consciousness of her meditated guilt, she could not avoid bursting into tears, and hugging it in her arms ; she then bid her old servant a good night, for the first time she had ever done so, and went to bed as usual.

It is probable she soon quitted her bed, and was seized with an alternation of passions, before she yielded to the impulse of despair. She dressed herself in clean linen and white garments of every kind, like a bride-maid. Her gown was pinned over her breast, just as a nurse pins the swaddling-

[1] These lines, with the substance of the details of the end of this tragic story, are in the before referred to account in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. — Ed.

clothes of an infant. A pink silk girdle was the instrument with which she resolved to terminate her misery, and this was lengthened by another made of gold thread. The end of the former was tied with a noose, and the latter with three knots at a small distance from one another.

Thus prepared, she sat down again and read; for she left the book open at that place, in the story of Olympia, in the "Orlando Furioso" of Ariosto, where by the perfidy and ingratitude of her bosom friend she was ruined and left to the mercy of an unpitying world. This tragical event gave her fresh spirits to go through her fatal purpose; so, standing upon a stool, and flinging the girdle, which was tied round her neck, over a closet door that opened into her chamber, she remained suspended. Her weight, however, broke the girdle, and the poor despairer fell on the floor with such violence, that her fall awakened a workman that lay in the house, about half an hour after two o'clock. Recovering herself, she began to walk about the room, as her usual custom was when she wanted sleep; and the workman, imagining it to be only some ordinary accident, again went to sleep. She once more, therefore, had recourse to a stronger girdle made of silver thread,

and this kept her suspended till she died. Her old maid continued in the morning to wait as usual for the ringing of the bell, and protracted her patience, hour after hour, till two o'clock in the afternoon, when the workmen, at length entering the room through the window, found their unfortunate mistress still hanging and quite cold. The coroner's jury, being impanelled, brought in their verdict lunacy, and her corpse was next night decently buried in her father's grave, at the charge of a female companion, with whom she had for many years an inseparable intimacy.[1]

Thus ended a female wit, a toast, and a gamester; loved, admired, and forsaken, formed for the delight of society, fallen by imprudence into an object of pity. Hundreds in high life lamented her fate, and wished, when too late, to redress her injuries. They who once had helped to impair

[1] The words after "father's grave" are in both Goldsmith's editions, yet Prior has omitted them. The suicide occurred on Sept 8, 1731. "She was buried in a decent manner in the Abbey Church, in the grave of her honest, brave old father, a gentleman who had experienced some undeserved hardships in life, but who might be said to be thus far happy, that he lived not to see or hear of so tragical a catastrophe of his beloved daughter." — *Gentleman's Magazine*, as before, where, however, the lunacy and death are attributed to losses at the gaming-table simply. — ED.

her fortune now regretted that they had assisted in so mean a pursuit. The little effects she had left behind were bought up with the greatest avidity by those who desired to preserve some token of a companion that once had given them such delight. The remembrance of every virtue she was possessed of was now improved by pity. Her former follies were few, but the last swelled them to a large amount; and she remains the strongest instance to posterity, that want of prudence alone almost cancels every other virtue.

In all this unfortunate lady's affairs Mr. Nash took a peculiar concern; he directed her when they played, advised her when she deviated from the rules of caution, and performed the last offices of friendship after her decease by raising the auction of her little effects.

But he was not only the assistant and the friend of the fair sex, but also their defender. He secured their persons from insult, and their reputations from scandal. Nothing offended him more than a young fellow's pretending to receive favours from ladies he probably never saw. Nothing pleased him so much as seeing such a piece of deliberate mischief punished. Mr. Nash and one of his friends, being newly arrived at Tunbridge

from Bath, were one day on the walks, and seeing a young fellow of fortune with whom they had some slight acquaintance, joined him. After the usual chat and news of the day was over, Mr. Nash asked him how long he had been at the Wells, and what company was there. The other replied he had been at Tunbridge a month; but as for company, he could find as good at a Tyburn ball. Not a soul was to be seen, except a parcel of gamesters and ———, who would grant the last favour for a single stake at the pharaoh bank. "Look you there," continued he, "that goddess of midnight, so fine at t'other end of the walks, by Jove, she was mine this morning for half a guinea. And she there, who brings up the rear with powdered hair and dirty ruffles, she's pretty enough, but cheap, perfectly cheap. Why, my boys, to my own knowledge, you may have her for a crown and a dish of chocolate into the bargain. Last Wednesday night we were happy." "Hold there, sir," cried the gentleman; "as for your having the first lady, it is possible it may be true, and I intend to ask her about it, for she is my sister; but as to your lying with the other last Wednesday, I am sure you are a lying rascal . . . She is my wife, and we came here but last night."

The buck vainly asked pardon; the gentleman was going to give him proper chastisement, when Mr. Nash interposed in his behalf, and obtained his pardon upon condition that he quitted Tunbridge immediately.

But Mr. Nash not only took care, during his administration, to protect the ladies from the insults of our sex, but to guard them from the slanders of each other. He, in the first place, prevented any animosities that might arise from place and precedence by being previously acquainted with the rank and quality of almost every family in the British dominions. He endeavoured to render scandal odious by marking it as the result of envy and folly united. Not even Solon could have enacted a wiser law in such a society as Bath. The gay, the heedless, and the idle, who mostly compose the group of water-drinkers, seldom are at the pains of talking upon universal topics which require comprehensive thought or abstract reasoning. The adventures of the little circle of their own acquaintance, or of some names of quality and fashion, make up their whole conversation. But it is too likely that when we mention those we wish to depress them, in order to render ourselves more conspicuous. Scandal must, there-

fore, have fixed her throne at Bath preferable to any other part of the kingdom. However, though these endeavours could not totally suppress this custom among the fair, yet they gained him the friendship of several ladies of distinction who had smarted pretty severely under the lash of censure. Among this number was the old Duchess of Marlborough, who conceived a particular friendship for him, and which continued during her life. She frequently consulted him in several concerns of a private nature. Her letting leases, building bridges, or forming canals, were often carried on under his guidance; but she advised with him particularly in purchasing liveries for the footmen, a business to which she thought his genius best adapted. As anything relative to her may please the curiosity of such as delight in the anecdotes and letters of the great, however dull and insipid, I shall beg leave to present them with one or two of her letters, collected at a venture from several others to the same purpose.

"*To Mr. Nash, at the Bath.*

"BLENHEIM, Sept. 18, 1724.

"Mr. Jennens will give you an account how little time I have in my power, and that will make

my excuse for not thanking you sooner for the favour of your letter, and for the trouble you have given yourself in bespeaking the cloth, which I am sure will be good, since you have undertaken to order it. Pray ask Mrs. Jennens concerning the cascade, which will satisfy all doubts in that matter; she saw it play, which it will do in great beauty, for at least six hours together, and it runs enough to cover all the stones constantly, and is a hundred feet broad, which I am told is a much greater breadth than any cascade is in England; and this will be yet better than it is, when it is quite finished. This water is a great addition to this place, and the lake being thirty acres, out of which the cascade comes, and falls into the canal that goes through the bridge, it makes that look as if it was necessary, which before seemed so otherwise. I am your most humble servant,

"S. MARLBOROUGH."

"*To Mr. Nash, at the Bath.*

"MARLBOROUGH HOUSE, May 17, 1735.

"SIR:—I have received the favour of yours of the 10th of May, with that from Mr. Harvey. And by last post I received a letter from Mr. Overton, a sort of a bailiff and a surveyor, whom

I have employed a great while upon my estates in Wiltshire. He is a very active and very useful man of his sort. He writes to me that Mr. Harvey has been with him, and brought him a paper, which I sent you. He says that finding he was a man that was desirous to serve me, he had assisted him all he could by informations which he has given; and that he should continue to assist him. I have writ to him that he did mighty well. There is likewise a considerable tenant of my Lord Bruce's, his name is Cannons, who has promised me his assistance toward recommending tenants for these farms. And if Mr. Harvey happens to know such a man, he may put him in mind of it. I am sure you do[1] me all the good you can. And I hope you are sure that I shall always be sensible of the obligations I have to you, and ever be your most thankful and obliged humble servant,

"S. MARLBOROUGH.

"Mr. Harvey may conclude to take any prices that were given you in the paper. But as I know

[1] So in the second edition. The first has "you will do." The dates of these letters are rather far apart, but they may nevertheless be correct. The two early editions agree in regard to them. — ED.

that we have been scandalously cheated, if he finds that anything can be let better than it has been let, I do not doubt but he will do it."

The Duchess of Marlborough seems not to be a much better writer than Mr. Nash; but she was worth many hundred thousand pounds, and that might console her. It may give splenetic philosophy, however, some scope for meditation when it considers what a parcel of stupid trifles the world is ready to admire.

Whatever might have been Mr. Nash's other excellencies, there was one in which few exceeded him. I mean his extensive humanity. None felt pity more strongly, and none made greater efforts to relieve distress. If I were to name any reigning and fashionable virtue in the present age, I think it should be charity. The numberless benefactions privately given, the various public solicitations for charity, and the success they meet with, serve to prove that though we may fall short of our ancestors in other respects, yet in this instance we greatly excel them. I know not whether it may not be spreading the influence of Mr. Nash too widely to say that he was one of the principal causes of introducing this noble emulation

among the rich; but certain it is, no private man ever relieved the distresses of so many as he did.

Before gaming was suppressed, and in the meridian of his life and fortune, his benefactions were generally found to equal his other expenses. The money he got without pain he gave away without reluctance; and whenever unable to relieve a wretch who sued for assistance, he has been often seen to shed tears. A gentleman of broken fortune, one day standing behind his chair, as he was playing a game of picquet for two hundred pounds, and observing with what indifference he won the money, could not avoid whispering these words to another who stood by: "Heavens! how happy would all that money make me!" Nash, overhearing him, clapped the money into his hand, and cried, "Go and be happy."

About six and thirty years ago a clergyman brought his family to Bath for the benefit of the waters. His wife laboured under a lingering disorder, which it was thought nothing but the Hotwells could remove. The expenses of living there soon lessened the poor man's finances; his clothes were sold, piece by piece, to provide a temporary relief for his little family, and his appearance was

at last so shabby that, from the number of holes in his coat and stockings, Nash gave him the name of Doctor Cullender. Our beau, it seems, was rude enough to make a jest of poverty, though he had sensibility enough to relieve it. The poor clergyman combated his distresses with fortitude, and, instead of attempting to solicit relief, endeavoured to conceal them. Upon a living of £30 a year he endeavoured to maintain his wife and six children; but all his resources at last failed him, and nothing but famine was seen in the wretched family. The poor man's circumstances were at last communicated to Nash, who, with his usual cheerfulness, undertook to relieve him. On a Sunday evening, at a public tea-drinking at Harrison's, he went about to collect a subscription, and began it himself by giving five guineas. By this means two hundred guineas were collected in less than two hours, and the poor family raised from the lowest despondence into affluence and felicity. A bounty so unexpected had a better influence even upon the woman's constitution than all that either the physicians or the waters of Bath could produce, and she recovered. But his good offices did not rest here. He prevailed upon a nobleman of his acquaintance to present the doctor with a

living of £160 a year, which made that happiness he had before produced in some measure permanent.

In the severe winter of the year 1739 his charity was great, useful, and extensive. He frequently, at that season of calamity, entered the houses of the poor whom he thought too proud to beg, and generously relieved them. The colliers were at this time peculiarly distressed; and in order to excite compassion, a number of them yoked themselves to a wagon loaded with coals, and drew it into Bath, and presented it to Mr. Nash. Their scheme had the proper effect. Mr. Nash procured them a subscription, and gave ten guineas toward it himself. The weavers also shared his bounty at that season. They came begging in a body into Bath, and he provided a plentiful dinner for their entertainment, and gave each a week's subsistence at going away.

There are few public charities to which he was not a subscriber, and many he principally contributed to support. Among others, Mr. Annesley, that strange example of the mutability of fortune, and the inefficacy of our laws, shared his interest and bounty. I have now before me a well-written letter, addressed to Nash, in order to

obtain his interest for that unhappy gentleman; it comes from Mr. Henderson, a Quaker, who was Mr. Annesley's father's agent. This gentleman warmly espoused the young adventurer's interest, and, I am told, fell with him.[1]

"LONDON, October 23, 1756.

"MY GOOD FRIEND: — When I had the honour of conversing with thee at Tunbridge, in September last, concerning that most singular striking case of Mr. Annesley, whom I have known since he was about six years old, I being then employed by the late Lord Baron of Altham, his father, as his agent. From what I know of the affairs of that family, I am well assured, that Mr. Annesley is the legitimate son of the late Lord Baron of Altham, and, in consequence thereof, is entitled

[1] The case of the Annesley succession claim brought against Richard, sixth Earl of Anglesey (Irish Exchequer Court, Nov. 11–25, 1743), which resulted in the enstatement of the gentleman here mentioned, James Annesley, as heir. This affair constitutes one of Sir Bernard Burke's "Romances of the Aristocracy." Its story was told soon after the events in a book entitled "The Adventures of an Unfortunate Nobleman." It is said also to have suggested to Scott the plot of his "Guy Mannering;" and it was avowedly treated by Charles Reade in his novel and play "The Wandering Heir." — ED.

to the honours and estates of Anglesey. Were I not well assured of his right to those honours and estates, I would not give countenance to his claim. . . . I well remember that thou then madest me a promise to assist him in soliciting a subscription, that was then begun at Tunbridge; but as that place was not within the limits of thy province, thou couldst not promise to do much there. But thou saidst, that in case he would go to Bath in the season, thou wouldst then and there show how much thou wouldst be his friend.

"And now, my good friend, as the season is come on, and Mr. Annesley now at Bath, I beg leave to remind thee of that promise; and that thou wilt keep in full view the honour, the everlasting honour, that will naturally redound to thee from thy benevolence, and crown all the good actions of thy life. . . . I say, now in the vale of life, to relieve a distressed young nobleman, to extricate so immense an estate from the hands of oppression; to do this, will fix such a ray of glory on thy memory, as will speak forth thy praise to future ages. . . . This, with great respect, is the needful, from thy assured friend,

"WILLIAM HENDERSON.

"Be pleased to give my respects to Mr. Annesley and his spouse." [1]

Nash punctually kept his word with this gentleman. He began the subscription himself with the utmost liberality, and procured such a list of encouragers, as at once did honour to Mr. Annesley's cause and their own generosity. What a pity it was that this money, which was given for the relief of indigence only, went to feed a set of reptiles, who batten upon our weakness, miseries, and vice!

It may not be known to the generality of my readers, that the last act of the comedy, called "Esop," which was added to the French plot of Boursault, by Mr. Vanburgh, was taken from a story told of Mr. Nash upon a similar occasion.[2] He had in the early part of life made proposals of marriage to Miss V——, of D——; his affluence at that time, and the favour which he was in with the nobility, readily induced the young lady's father to favour his addresses. However, upon

[1] Both the author's editions have the date of this letter 1756; yet, as the trial took place in 1743, it is more likely that the correct date is 1736. — Ed.

[2] Vanburgh's play was produced at Drury Lane Theatre in 1697. — Ed.

opening the affair to herself, she candidly told him her affections were placed upon another, and that she could not possibly comply. Though this answer satisfied Mr. Nash, it was by no means sufficient to appease the father; and he peremptorily insisted upon her obedience. Things were carried to the last extremity, when Mr. Nash undertook to settle the affair, and desiring his favoured rival to be sent for, with his own hand presented his mistress to him, together with a fortune equal to what her father intended to give her. Such an uncommon instance of generosity had an instant effect upon the severe parent; he considered such disinterestedness as a just reproach to his own mercenary disposition, and took his daughter once more into favour. I wish, for the dignity of history, that the sequel could be concealed; but the young lady ran away with her footman, before half a year was expired, and her husband died of grief.

In general, the benefactions of a generous man are but ill bestowed. His heart seldom gives him leave to examine the real distress of the object which sues for pity; his good-nature takes the alarm too soon, and he bestows his fortune on only apparent wretchedness. The man naturally

frugal, on the other hand, seldom relieves, but when he does, his reason, and not his sensations, generally find out the object. Every instance of his bounty is therefore permanent, and bears witness to his benevolence.

Of all the immense sums which Nash lavished upon real or apparent wretchedness, the effects, after a few years, seemed to disappear. His money was generally given to support immediate want, or to relieve improvident indolence, and therefore it vanished in an hour. Perhaps toward the close of life, were he to look round on the thousand he had relieved, he would find but few made happy, or fixed by his bounty in a state of thriving industry; it was enough for him, that he gave to those that wanted; he never considered that charity to some might impoverish himself without relieving them; he seldom considered the merit or the industry of the petitioner; or he rather fancied that misery was an excuse for indolence and guilt. It was a usual saying of his, when he went to beg for any person in distress, that they who could stoop to the meanness of solicitation must certainly want the favour for which they petitioned.

In this manner, therefore, he gave away im-

mense sums of his own, and still greater which he procured from others. His way was, when any person was proposed to him as an object of charity, to go around with his hat first among the nobility, according to their rank, and so on, till he left scarce a single person unsolicited. They who go thus about to beg for others, generally find a pleasure in the task. They consider, in some measure, every benefaction they procure, as given by themselves, and have at once the pleasure of being liberal, without the self-reproach of being profuse.

But of all the instances of Nash's bounty, none does him more real honour than the pains he took in establishing a hospital at Bath, in which benefaction, however, Doctor Oliver had a great share. This was one of those well guided charities, dictated by reason, and supported by prudence. By this institution the diseased poor might recover health, when incapable of receiving it in any other part of the kingdom. As the disorders of the poor, who could expect to find relief at Bath, were mostly chronical, the expense of maintaining them there was found more than their parishes thought proper to afford. They therefore chose to support them in a continual state of infirmity, by a small allowance at home, rather than be at

the charge of an expensive cure. A hospital, therefore, at Bath, it was thought, would be an asylum and a place of refuge to those disabled creatures, and would, at the same time, give the physician [a] more thorough insight into the efficacy of the waters, from the regularity with which such patients would be obliged to take them. These inducements, therefore, influenced Doctor Oliver and Mr. Nash to promote a subscription toward such a benefaction. The design was set on foot so early as the year 1711, but was not completed till the year 1742. This delay, which seems surprising, was in fact owing to the want of a proper fund for carrying the work into execution. What I said above, of charity being the characteristic virtue of the present age, will be more fully evinced by comparing the old and new subscriptions for this hospital. These will show the difference between ancient and modern benevolence. When I run my eye over the list of those who subscribed in the year 1723, I find the subscriptions in general seldom rise above a guinea each person, so that, at that time, with all their efforts, they were unable to raise four hundred pounds; but in about twenty years after, each particular subscription was greatly increased —

ten, twenty, thirty pounds, being the most ordinary sums [then] [1] subscribed, and they soon raised above two thousand pounds for the purpose.

Thus, chiefly by the means of Doctor Oliver and Mr. Nash, but not without the assistance of the good Mr. Allen,[2] who gave them the stone for building and other benefactions, this hospital was erected, and it is at present fitted up for the reception of patients, the cases mostly paralytic or leprous.[3] . . .

I am unwilling to leave this subject of his

[1] The word "then" is from the first edition. — ED.

[2] Ralph Allen, of Prior Park, near Bath, the friend of Pope and Fielding, the first of whom put him in the couplet:

> "Let humble Allen, with an awkward shame,
> Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame."

While the other drew him in the character of Squire Allworthy ("Tom Jones"). He lived three years after this publication by Goldsmith. Mr. Peach reminds us (in his interesting "Historic Houses in Bath," 1883), that "good Mr. Allen" was "the inventor of the cross-post system," the foundation of our modern postal system. Mr. Peach, by the way, holds that Allen and the architect Wood were the real makers of modern Bath, and he will not admit Nash even to a third place with them in the making. Upon Goldsmith's "Life of Nash" he is also very severe, saying that it is "a vast apology." — ED.

[3] In place of the points the originals have two pages giving the process of admission to the hospital, etc., which, taken as these manifestly are from some guide-book of the time, need not be given here. — ED.

benevolence, because it is a virtue in his character which must stand almost single against a hundred follies; and it deserves the more to be insisted on, because it was large enough to outweigh them all.[1] A man may be a hypocrite safely in every other instance but in charity; there are few who will buy the character of benevolence at the rate for which it must be acquired. In short, the sums he gave away were immense; and in old age, when at last grown too poor to give relief, he gave, as the poet has it, all he had — a tear;[2] when incapable of relieving the agonies of the wretched, he attempted to relieve his own by a flood of sorrow. The sums he gave and collected for the hospital were great, and his manner of doing it was no less admirable. I am told that he was once[3] collecting money in Wiltshire's room for

[1] This character of Nash existed long before Goldsmith came to write the present "Life." The *London Magazine* of 1745, p. 345, has the following: "I cannot quit Mr. N—h without observing to his honour, that he is no less a promoter of public charity than a hero in every diversion. You see him as complaisant and diligent with the basin at the abbey, to collect alms for the hospital and charity children, as he is busy in getting subscriptions for balls." — Ed.

[2] Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," — the Epitaph. — Ed.

[3] The capital story which follows — good, even if not true —

that purpose, when a lady entered, who is more remarkable for her wit than her charity, and not being able to pass by him unobserved, she gave him a pat with her fan, and said, "You must put down a trifle for me, Nash, for I have no money in my pocket." "Yes, madam," says he, "that I will with pleasure, if your Grace will tell me when to stop;" then taking a handful of guineas out of his pocket, he began to tell them into his white hat. "One, two, three, four, five —" "Hold, hold!" says the duchess, "consider what you are about." "Consider your rank and fortune, madam," says Nash, and continued telling, "six, seven, eight, nine, ten." Here the duchess called again, and seemed angry. "Pray compose yourself, madam," cried Nash, "and don't interrupt the work of charity — eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen." Here the duchess stormed, and caught hold of his hand. "Peace, madam," says Nash; "you shall have your name written in letters of gold, madam, and upon the front of the building, madam. Sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty." "I won't pay a farthing more," says the duchess. "Charity hides a multitude of

was added in the second edition. Prior omitted it, probably because he printed from the first edition. — Ed.

sins," replies Nash; "twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five." "Nash," says she, "I protest you frighten me out of my wits. L—d, I shall die!" "Madam, you will never die with doing good, and if you do, it will be the better for you," answered Nash, and was about to proceed, but perceiving her Grace had lost all patience, a parley ensued, when he, after much altercation, agreed to stop his hand, and compound with her Grace for thirty guineas. The duchess, however, seemed displeased the whole evening, and when he came to the table where she was playing, bid him "Stand farther, an ugly devil, for she hated the sight of him." But her Grace afterward having a run of good luck, called Nash to her. "Come," says she, "I'll be friends with you, though you are a fool; and to let you see I am not angry, there is ten guineas more for your charity. But this I must insist on, that neither my name nor the sum shall be mentioned."

From the hospital erected for the benefit of the poor, it is an easy transition to the monuments erected by him in honour of the great. Upon the recovery of the Prince of Orange, by drinking the Bath waters, Mr. Nash caused a small obelisk, thirty feet high, to be erected in a grove near the

abbey church, since called Orange Grove. This prince's arms adorn the west side of the body of the pedestal. The inscription is on the opposite side, in the following words:

"In memoriam sanitatis Principi Auriaco Aquarum thermalium potu. Favente Deo, ovante Britannia, feliciter restitutæ, MDCCXXXIV." In English thus: "In memory of the happy restoration of the health of the Prince of Orange, through the favour of God, and to the great joy of Britain, by drinking the Bath waters. 1734."

I find it a general custom at all baths and spas to erect monuments of this kind to the memory of every prince who has received benefit from the waters. Aix, Spa, and Pisa abound with inscriptions of this nature, apparently doing honour to the prince, but in reality celebrating the efficacy of their springs. It is wrong, therefore, to call such monuments instances of gratitude, though they may wear that appearance.

In the year 1738, the Prince of Wales came to Bath, who presented Mr. Nash with a large gold enamelled snuff-box, and upon his departure Nash, as king of Bath, erected an obelisk in honour of this prince, as he had before done for the Prince of Orange. This handsome memorial in honour

of that good-natured prince is erected in Queen Square. It is enclosed with a stone balustrade, and in the middle of every side there are large iron gates. In the centre is the obelisk, seventy feet high, and terminating in a point. The expenses of this were eighty pounds;[1] and Mr. Nash was determined that the inscription should answer the magnificence of the pile. With this view he wrote to Mr. Pope, at London, requesting an inscription. I should have been glad to have given Mr. Nash's letter upon this occasion; the reader, however, must be satisfied with Pope's reply, which is as follows:

"SIR:—I have received yours, and thank your partiality in my favour. You say words cannot express the gratitude you feel for the favour of his R. H., and yet you would have me express what you feel, and in a few words. I own myself unequal to the task; for even granting it possible to express an inexpressible idea, I am the worst person you could have pitched upon for this purpose, who have received so few favours from the great

[1] "Eighty pounds," mentioned here as the cost of the obelisk, must be a mistake. It is so, however, in both Goldsmith's editions. — ED.

myself, that I am utterly unacquainted with what kind of thanks they like best. Whether the p—— most loves poetry or prose, I protest I do not know; but this I dare venture to affirm, that you can give him as much satisfaction in either as I can. I am, sir, your affectionate servant,

"A. Pope."

What Mr. Nash's answer to this billet was I cannot take upon me to ascertain, but it was probably a perseverance in his former request. The following is the copy of Mr. Pope's reply to his second letter:

"Sir:—I had sooner answered yours, but in the hope of procuring a properer hand than mine; and then in consulting with some, whose office about the p—— might make them the best judges what sort of inscription to set up. Nothing can be plainer than the enclosed; it is nearly [1] the common sense of the thing, and I do not know how to flourish upon it. But this you would do as well or better yourself, and I dare say may mend the expression. I am truly, dear sir, your affectionate servant, A. Pope."

[1] This, perhaps, should be "merely." — Ed.

"I think I need not tell you my name should not be mentioned."[1]

Such a letter as this was what might naturally be expected from Mr. Pope. Notwithstanding the seeming modesty toward the conclusion, the vanity of an applauded writer bursts through every line of it. The difficulty of concealing his hand from the clerks[2] at the post-office, and the solicitude to have his name concealed, were marks of the consciousness of his own importance. It is probable his hand was not so very well known, nor his letters so eagerly opened by the clerks of the office, as he seems always to think; but in all his letters, as well as those of Swift, there runs a strain of pride, as if the world talked of nothing but themselves. "Alas," says he, in one of them, "the day after I am dead, the sun will shine as bright as the day before, and the world will be as merry as usual!" Very strange, that neither an

[1] These letters of Pope are not included in his correspondence. Warner, however, has them, and also Goldsmith's story about the inscription, in his "History of Bath," p. 368. — Ed.

[2] Johnson has charged Pope to a similar effect. Here, however, we think Goldsmith misinterprets the words "procuring a properer hand." May they not mean that the writer tried to get some other person to write the inscription, a job he (Pope) evidently did not care for himself? — Ed.

eclipse nor an earthquake should follow the loss of a poet!

The inscription referred to in this letter was the same which was afterward engraved on the obelisk, and is as follows:

"In memory of honours bestowed, and in gratitude for benefits conferred in this city, by his Royal Highness, Frederick, Prince of Wales, and his royal consort, in the year 1738, this obelisk is erected by Richard Nash, Esq."

I dare venture to say, there was scarce a common-councilman in the corporation of Bath but could have done this as well. Nothing can be more frigid, though the subject was worthy of the utmost exertions of genius.

About this period every season brought some new accession of honour to Mr. Nash, and the corporation now universally found that he was absolutely necessary for promoting the welfare of the city; so that this year seems to have been the meridian of his glory. About this time he arrived at such a pitch of authority, that I really believe Alexander was not greater at Persepolis. The countenance he received from the Prince of Orange, the favour he was in with the Prince of Wales, and the caresses of the nobility, all con-

spired to lift him to the utmost pitch of vanity. The exultation of a little mind, upon being admitted to the familiarity of the great, is inexpressible. The Prince of Orange had made him a present of a very fine snuff-box. Upon this some of the nobility thought it would be proper to give snuff-boxes too; they were quickly imitated by the middling gentry, and it soon became the fashion to give Mr. Nash snuff-boxes, who had in a little time a number sufficient to have furnished a good toy shop.

To add to his honours, there was placed of him a full-length picture in Wiltshire's ballroom, between the busts of Newton and Pope. It was upon this occasion that the Earl of Chesterfield wrote the following severe but witty epigram:

"Immortal Newton never spoke
More truth than here you'll find,
Nor Pope himself e'er penn'd a joke
Severer on mankind.

"The picture plac'd the busts between
Gives satire its full strength;
Wisdom and Wit are little seen
But Folly at full length."[1]

[1] The first edition has: "To add to his honours, the corporation of Bath placed a full-length statue of him in the pump-

There is also a full-length picture of Mr. Nash in Simpson's ballroom, and his statue at full length in the pump-room, with a plan of the Bath Hospital in his hand.[1] He was now treated in every respect like a great man; he had his levee, his flatterers, his buffoons, his good-natured creatures, and even his dedicators. A trifling, ill-supported vanity was his foible; and while he received the homage of the vulgar, and enjoyed the familiarity of the great, he felt no pain for the unpromising view of poverty that lay before him: he enjoyed the world as it went, and drew upon content for the deficiencies of fortune. If a cringing

room, between the busts of Newton and Pope." That edition also gave as the Chesterfield epigram, the four lines beginning: "The statue placed," etc. The second edition reads as above, and yet Warner (p. 368) and others give the four-line epigram just mentioned, and tell of a statue as its subject. There are similar contradictions as to the epigram itself. It is generally attributed to Chesterfield, and is in Maty's edition of his works, but Mr. Dyce found it to be part of six stanzas by Jane Brereton, who wrote under the name of Melissa. The facts that Melissa's poems were published by Cave in 1742, and the above two-stanza epigram was published (and for the first time, it is thought) by Cave in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1741, seem to favour the lady's claim. The epigram in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (p. 102) is headed: "On Mr. Nash's present of his own picture, at full length, fixt between the bustos of Mr. Pope and Sir Isaac Newton in the Long Room at Bath." — Ed.

[1] An addition to the second edition. — Ed.

wretch called him "his Honour," he was pleased, internally conscious that he had the justest pretensions to the title. If a beggar called him "my lord," he was happy, and generally sent the flatterer off happy too. I have known him in London wait a whole day at a window in the Smyrna Coffee House,[1] in order to receive a bow from the prince or the Duchess of Marlborough, as they passed by where he was standing; and he would then look round upon the company for admiration and respect.[2]

[1] The Smyrna Coffee House was in Pall Mall, near Marlborough House. — ED.

[2] Here and in several other passages the biographer deviates from the invariable accuracy of his narrative in order to "make believe" that he was personally acquainted with his hero. Take the above as an illustration. The Duchess of Marlborough died in 1744 — when Goldsmith was about fifteen, and had not left home for college even. It is pretty certain that Goldsmith never saw Nash, and that the visit to Bath in 1762 (the year after Nash's death) was the poet's first visit. It is such lapses, no doubt, that have caused this "Life of Nash" to be often looked upon as an ingenious work of the "Robinson Crusoe" and "History of the Plague" order; but, as we have already said (Introductory Note, p. x.), the narrative is generally very close to the facts, both in regard to Nash and Bath, as they are recorded by the Bath historians, etc. To be sure, there is another way of looking at these passages. As the biographer avowedly writes from materials in the main supplied by another (George Scott, Esq., the administrator, as we may say, of Nash's estate, *vide* Goldsmith's "Advertisement," p. viii., and his note at pp. 5,

But perhaps the reader desires to know who could be low enough to flatter a man who himself lived in some measure by dependence. Hundreds are ready upon those occasions. The very needy are almost ever flatterers. A man in wretched circumstances forgets his own value, and feels no pain in giving up superiority to every claimant. The very vain are ever flatterers; as they find it necessary to make use of all their arts to keep company with such as are superior to themselves. But particularly the prodigal are prone to adulation, in order to open new supplies for their extravagance. The poor, the vain, and the extravagant are chiefly addicted to this vice; and such hung upon his good nature. When these three characters are found united in one person, the composition generally becomes a great man's favourite. It was not difficult to collect such a group in a city that was the centre of pleasure. Nash had them of all sizes, from the half-pay captain in laced clothes, to the humble boot-catcher at the Bear.[1]

6, 138, etc.), it may be assumed that in such passages he writes in the first person as representing his informant. — Ed.

[1] The Bear Hotel. It stood on the site of Union Street, and was demolished about 1798. Anstey mentions it in the "New Bath Guide," and Smollett in "Humphrey Clinker." — Ed.

I have before me a bundle of letters, all addressed from a pack of flattering reptiles, to "his Honour," and even some printed dedications in the same servile strain. In these "his Honour" is complimented as the great encourager of the polite arts, as a gentleman of the most accomplished taste, of the most extensive learning, and, in short, of everything in the world. But, perhaps, it will be thought wrong in me to unveil the blushing muse, to brand learning with the meanness of its professors, or to expose scholars in a state of contempt. . . . For the honour of letters, the dedications to Mr. Nash are not written by scholars or poets, but by people of a different stamp.

Among this number was the highwayman who was taken after attempting to rob and murder Doctor Hancock. He was called Poulter, *alias* Baxter, and published a book exposing the tricks of gamblers, thieves, and pickpockets. This he intended to have dedicated to Mr. Nash, but the generous patron, though no man loved praise more, was too modest to have it printed. However, he took care to preserve the manuscript among the rest of his papers. The book was entitled "The Discoveries of John Poulter, *alias* Baxter, who was

apprehended for robbing Doctor Hancock of Salisbury, on Claverton [1] Down, near Bath; and who has since been admitted king's evidence, and discovered a most numerons gang of villains [many of which have been already taken]. Being a full account of all the robberies he [has] committed, and the surprising tricks and frauds he has practised for the space of five years last past, in different parts of England, particularly in the west.[2] Written wholly by Himself." [3] The dedication intended to be prefixed is as follows, and will give a specimen of the style of a highwayman and a gambler:

[1] So in the second edition. The first edition and also the title in Poulter's book have "Clarken Down." Claverton is the correct name of the place. — ED.

[2] "Particularly in the west" is not in Poulter's title, 1753 and 1761. — ED.

[3] This book appeared in a number of editions. The seventh (printed at Sherborne) bears date 1753. The twelfth is dated 1761, and has an addition showing that Poulter, having escaped from prison, was retaken, and finally hanged, though many efforts were made to save him. In Douglas Jerrold's comedy, "Beau Nash, King of Bath" (played at the Haymarket Theatre in 1834, but not included in Jerrold's "Works"), Poulter, *alias* Baxter, is one of the leading characters. The part was played by the late Mr. Benjamin Webster, W. Farren the elder being the Beau. Jerrold, by the way, acknowledged that he founded his play upon the present "Life of Nash." — ED.

"*To the Honourable Richard Nash, Esq.*

"May it please your Honour — With humblest submission I make bold to present the following sheets to your Honour's consideration and well-known humanity. As I am industriously careful, in respect to his Majesty and good subjects, to put an end to the unfortunate misconducts of all I know, by bringing them to the gallows. To be sure some may censure, as if from self-preservation I made this ample discovery; but I communicate this to your Honour and gentry, whether the life of one person being taken away, would answer the end, as to let escape such a number of villains, who has been the ruining of many a poor family, for whom my soul is now much concerned. If my inclinations was ever so roguish inclined, what is it to so great a number of villains, when they consult together. As your Honour's wisdom, humanity, and interest are the friend of the virtuous, I make bold to lay at your honour's feet the following lines, which will put every honest man upon his defence against the snares of the mischievous; and am, with the greatest gratitude, honoured sir, your Honour's most truly devoted and obedient servant,

"JOHN POULTER, *alias* BAXTER.

"*Taunton Gaol, June 2d.*"

Flattery from such a wretch as this one would think but little pleasing; however, certain it is that Nash was pleased with it. He loved to be

called "your Honour," and "Honourable," and the highwayman more than once experienced his generosity.

But since I have mentioned this fellow's book,[1] I cannot repress an impulse to give an extract from it; however foreign from my subject. I take the following picture to be a perfectly humourous description of artful knavery affecting ignorance on one hand, and rustic simplicity pretending to great wisdom and sagacity on the other. It is an account of the manner in which countrymen are deceived by gamblers, at a game called pricking in the belt, or the old nob. This is a leathern strop folded up double, and then laid upon a table; if the person who plays with a bodkin pricks into the loop of the belt he wins, if otherwise he loses. However, by slipping one end of the strop, the sharper can win at[2] pleasure.

"There are generally four persons concerned in this fraud, one to personate a sailor, called a Legg Cull, another called the Capper, who always keeps with the

[1] This paragraph and the extract from the highwayman's book are omitted from Prior's reprint. They are in both Goldsmith's editions. — Ed.

[2] "At" is from the first edition. The second edition has "with pleasure." — Ed.

sailor; and two pickers-up, or Money-droppers, to bring in Flats or Bubbles. The first thing they do at a fair is to look for a room clear of company, which the sailor and Capper immediately take, while the Money-droppers go out to look for a Flat. If they see a countryman whose looks they like, one drops a shilling or half a crown just before him, and picking it up again, looks the man in the face, and says, 'I have found a piece of money, friend; did you see me pick it up?' The man says 'Yes.' Then says the sharper, 'If you had found it I would have had half, so I will do as I would be done unto; come, honest friend, we will not part with dry lips.' Then taking him into the room, where the other two are, he cries, 'By your leave, gentlemen, I hope we don't disturb the company.' 'No,' cries the sailor, 'no, brothers; will you drink a glass of brandy? I don't like your weak liquors;' and then begins a discourse, by asking the Capper how far it is to London; who replies, 'I don't know; perhaps the gentleman there can tell you,' directing his discourse to the Flat. Perhaps the Flat will answer, 'A hundred miles.' The sailor cries, 'I can ride that in a day, ay, in four or five hours, for,' says he, 'my horse will run twenty knots an hour for twenty-four hours together.' Capper, or the sailor's supposed companion, says, 'I believe, farmer, you have not got such a horse as the sailor has.' The farmer says 'No,' and laughs; and then the sailor says, 'I must go and get half a pint of brandy, for I am griped,' and so leaves them. The Capper, affecting a

look of wisdom in his absence, observes that 'it is an old saying, and a true one, that sailors get their money like horses, and spend it like asses; as for that there sailor, I never saw him till now, buying a horse of my man; he tells me he has been at sea, and has got about four hundred pounds prize-money, but I believe he will squander it all away, for he was gaming just now with a sharping fellow, and lost forty shillings at a strange game of pricking in a string. Did either of you ever see it?' 'Gentlemen,' continued the Capper, 'if you two are willing I will ask him to show it, for we may as well win some of his money as anybody else.' The Flat and the Dropper cry, 'Do.' Then in comes the sailor, staggering as if drunk, and cries, 'What cheer, brothers? I have just seen a pretty girl in the fair, and went in to drink with her; we made a bargain, and I gave her a six and thirty shilling piece, but an old ———, her mother, came and called her away, but I hope she will come back to me presently.' Then the Capper laughs, and says, 'Have you got your money of her again?' The sailor says, 'No; but she will come to me, I'm sure;' then they all laugh. This is done to deceive the Flat; then says the Capper, 'What have you done with the stick and the string, sailor?' He answers, 'What, that which I bought of the boys? I have got it here, but will not sell it;' and then he pulls out the Old Nob, saying, 'What do you think I gave for it? I gave but sixpence, and as much brandy as the two boys could drink; it is made out of a monkey's hide, as the boys told me, and they

told me there is a game to be played at it, which nobody can do twice together; I will go down aboard ship and play with my captain, and I do not fear but I shall win his ship and cargo.' Then they all laugh, and the sailor makes up the Old Nob, and the Capper lays a shilling, and pricks himself and wins. The sailor cries, 'You are a dab, I will not lay with you, but if you will call a stranger, I will lay again.' 'Why, if you think me a dab, as you call it, I will get this strange gentleman, or this' (pointing to the Flat). 'Done,' cries the sailor, 'but you shall not tell him.' Then he makes up the Nob, and Capper lays a shilling; Flat pricks, being permitted to go sixpence; to which, he agreeing, wins; and Capper says to the Flat, 'Can you change me half a crown?' This is done to find the depth of his pocket; if they see a good deal of gold, Flat must win three or four times; if no gold, but twice. Sometimes, if the Flat has no money, the sailor cries, 'I have more money than any man in the fair,' and pulls out his purse of gold, and saith, 'Not one of you can beg, borrow, or steal half this sum in an hour for a guinea.' Capper cries, 'I have laid out all mine; farmer, can you? I'll go you halves, if you think you can do it.' The sailor saith, 'You must not bring anybody with you.' Then the Dropper goes, with the Flat, and saith, 'You must not tell your friend it is for a wager; if you do he will not lend it you.' Flat goes and borrows it, and brings it to the sailor, shows it him, and wins the wager; then the sailor pinches the Nob again, and the Capper whispers to

the Flat, to prick out purposely this time, saying, 'It will make the sailor more eager to lay on; we may as well win his money as not, for he will spend it upon ———.' Flat, with all the wisdom in the world, loses on purpose, upon which the sailor swears, pulls out all his money, throws it about the room, and cries, 'I know no man can win for ever,' and then lays a guinea, but will not let him prick, but throws down five guineas, and the Capper urging the Flat, and going his halves, the sailor saith, 'My cabin boy will lay as much as that; I'll lay no less than twenty guineas.' The Capper cries, 'Lay, farmer, and take up forty;' which, being certain of winning, he instantly complies with, and loses the whole. When he has lost, in order to advise him, the Dropper takes him by the arm, and hauls him out-of-doors; and the reckoning being in the meantime paid within, the Capper and sailor follow after, and run another way. When they are out of sight the Dropper saith to the Flat, 'Go you back and play with the sailor for a shilling, whilst I go and borrow money;' but when the Flat goes to the house, he finds them gone, and then he knows that he is bit, but not till he has dearly paid for it." [1]

By this fellow's discoveries Mr. Nash was enabled to serve many of the nobility and gentry of his acquaintance; he received a list of all those houses of ill fame which harboured or assisted

[1] From Poulter's book, p. 31. — Ed.

rogues, and took care to furnish travellers with proper precautions to avoid them. It was odd enough to see a gamester thus employed in detecting the frauds of gamblers.

Among the dedications there is one from a Professor of Cookery, which is even more adulatory than the preceding. It is prefixed to a work entitled, "The Complete Preserver; or a new method of preserving fruits, flowers, and other vegetables, either with or without sugar, vinegar, or spirits," etc.

"*To the Very Honourable Richard Nash, Esq.*

"HONOURED SIR: — As much as the oak exceeds the bramble, so much do you exceed the rest of mankind in benevolence, charity, and every other virtue that adorns, ennobles, and refines the human species. I have therefore made bold to prefix your name, though without permission, to the following work, which stands in need of such a patron, to excuse its errors, with a candour only known to such a heart as your own. The obligations I have received at your hands, it is impossible for me ever to repay, except by my endeavours, as in the present case, to make known the many excellent virtues which you possess. But what can my wit do to recommend such a genius as yours: a single word, a smile from yourself, outweighs

all that I, or perhaps the best of our poets, could express in writing in the compass of a year. It would ill become my sex to declare what power you have over us; but your generosity is, even in this instance, greater than your desire to oblige. The following sheets were drawn up at my hours of leisure, and may be serviceable to such of my sex as are more willing to employ their time in laudable occupations and domestic economy, than in dress and dissipation. What reception they may receive from your Honour, I am incapable of telling; however, from your known candour and humanity, I expect the most favourable. I am, honoured sir, your most obedient and obliged humble servant, H. W."

A musician in his dedication still exceeds the other two in adulation. However, though the matter may be some impeachment on his sincerity, the manner in which it is written reflects no disgrace upon his understanding.

"*To Richard Nash, Esq.*

"SIR: — The kind partiality of my friends prevailed with me to present to the world these my first attempts in musical composition; and the generous protection you have been pleased to afford me makes it my indispensable duty to lay them at your feet. Indeed, to whom could I presume to offer them, but to the

great encourager of all polite arts; for your generosity knows no bounds; nor are you more famed for that dignity of mind, which ennobles and gives a grace to every part of your conduct, than for that humanity and beneficence which makes you the friend and benefactor of all mankind. To you, the poor and the rich, the diseased and the healthy, the aged and the young, owe every comfort, every conveniency, and every innocent amusement, that the best heart, the most skilful management, and the most accomplished taste can furnish. Even this age, so deeply practised in all the subtleties of refined pleasure, gives you this testimony; even this age, so ardently engaged in all the ways of the most unbounded charity, gives you this praise. Pardon me then, if, amidst the crowd of votaries, I make my humble offering, if I seize this first opportunity of publicly expressing the grateful sentiments of my own heart and profound respect, with which I am, sir, your most obliged, most devoted, and most obedient servant, J. G."

I fancy I have almost fatigued the reader, and I am almost fatigued myself, with the efforts of these elegant panegyrists; however, I can't finish this run of quotation, without giving a specimen of poetry, addressed to him upon a certain occasion, and all I shall say in its defence is, that those who are pleased with the prose dedications will not dislike the present attempt in poetry.

"*To Richard Nash, Esq., on his Sickness at Tunbridge.*

"Say, must the friend of human kind,
Of most refin'd — of most diffusive mind;
Must Nash himself beneath these ailments grieve?
He felt for all — he felt — but to relieve,
To heal the sick — the wounded to restore,
And bid desponding nature mourn no more.
Thy quick'ning warmth, oh let thy patron feel,
Improve thy springs with double power to heal:
Quick, hither, all-inspiring Health, repair,
And save the gay — and wretched from despair;
Thou only Esra's drooping sons can'st cheer,
And stop the soft-ey'd virgin's trickling tear;
In murmurs who their Monarch's pains deplore;
While sickness faints, and pleasure is no more;
Oh let not Death, with hasty strides advance,
Thou, mildest Charity, avert the lance;
His threat'ning power, cœlestial maid! defeat;
Nor take him with thee, to thy well known seat;
Leave him on earth some longer date behind,
To bless, — to polish, — and relieve mankind:
Come then kind Health! oh quickly come away,
Bid Nash revive — and all the world be gay."

Such addresses as these were daily offered to our titular king. When in the meridian of power, scarce a morning passed that did not increase the number of his humble admirers, and enlarge the sphere of his vanity.

The man who is constantly served up with adulation must be a first-rate philosopher, if he can listen without contracting new affectations. The opinion we form of ourselves is generally measured by what we hear from others; and when they conspire to deceive, we too readily concur in the delusion. Among the number of much applauded men in the circle of our own friends, we can recollect but few that have heads quite strong enough to bear a loud acclamation of public praise in their favour; among the whole list we shall scarce find one that has not thus been made, on some side of his character, a coxcomb.

When the best head turns and grows giddy with praise, is it to be wondered that poor Nash should be driven by it almost into a frenzy of affectation? Toward the close of life he became affected. He chiefly laboured to be thought a sayer of good things, and by frequent attempts was now and then successful, for he ever lay upon the lurch.

There never perhaps was a more silly passion than this desire of having a man's jests recorded. For this purpose, it is necessary to keep ignorant or ill-bred company, who are only fond of repeating such stories; in the next place, a person must tell his own jokes, in order to make them more

universal; but what is worst of all, scarce a joke of this kind succeeds, but at the expense of a man's good nature, and he who exchanges the character of being thought agreeable for that of being thought witty, makes but a very bad bargain.

The success Nash sometimes met with led him on, when late in life, to mistake his true character. He was really agreeable, but he chose to be thought a wit. He therefore indulged his inclination, and never mattered how rude he was, provided he was thought comical. He thus got the applause he sought for, but too often found enemies where he least expected to find them. Of all the jests recorded of him,[1] I scarce find one that is not marked with petulance: he said whatever came uppermost, and in the number of his remarks it might naturally be expected that some were worth repeating; he threw often, and sometimes had a lucky cast.

In a life of almost ninety years, spent in the very point of public view, it is not strange that five or six sprightly things of his have been col-

[1] A collection of "The Jests of Beau Nash" was published a year later than the date of this "Life;" see p. 194. But doubtless Nash's jests were in print before that publication. — Ed.

lected, particularly as he took every opportunity of repeating them himself. His usual way, when he thought he said anything clever, was to strengthen it with an oath,[1] and to make up its want of sentiment by asseveration and grimace. For many years he thus entertained the company at the coffee-house with old stories, in which he always made himself the principal character. Strangers liked this well enough; but they who were used to his conversation found it insupportable. One story brought on another, and each came in the same order that it had the day preceding. But this custom may be rather ascribed to the peculiarity of age, than a peculiarity of character. It seldom happens that old men allure, at least by novelty; age that shrivels the body contracts the understanding; instead of exploring new regions, they rest satisfied in the old, and walk round the circle of their former discoveries. His manner of telling a story, however, was not displeasing; but few of those he told are worth transcribing. Indeed, it is the manner which places the whole difference between

[1] Here, no doubt, we have some of the ground of Mr. Forster's theory that the character of Beau Tibbs is formed upon that of Beau Nash. See p. 64. — ED.

the wit of the vulgar and of those who assume the name of the polite: one has in general as much good sense as the other; a story transcribed from the one will be as entertaining as that copied from the other, but in conversation the manner will give charms even to stupidity. The following is the story which he most frequently told, and pretty much in these words. Suppose the company to be talking of a German war, or Elizabeth Canning, he would begin thus: "Ill tell you something to that purpose, that I fancy will make you laugh. A covetous old parson, as rich as the devil, scraped a fresh acquaintance with me several years ago at Bath. I knew him when he and I were students at Oxford, where we both studied damnationly hard; but that's neither here nor there. Well; very well. I entertained him at my house in John's Court. (No, my house in John's Court was not built then);[1] but I entertained him with all that the city could afford, the rooms, the music, and everything in the world. Upon his leaving Bath, he pressed me very hard to return

[1] Nash lived successively in two houses in St. John's Court, Bath. His first house here was built about 1720. It is now the Garrick's Head. Mrs. Delany lived there after Nash. The Beau removed to the house now marked with a tablet, and used as a furniture warehouse. — ED.

the visit, and desired me to let him have the pleasure of seeing me at his house in Devonshire. About six months after, I happened to be in that neighbourhood, and was resolved to see my old friend, from whom I expected a very warm reception. Well; I knocks at his door, when an old queer creature of a maid came to the door, and denied him. I suspected, however, that he was at home; and going into the parlour, what should I see but the parson's legs up the chimney, where he had thrust himself to avoid entertaining me. This was very well. My dear, says I to the maid, it is very cold, extreme cold indeed, and I am afraid I have got a touch of my ague; light me the fire, if you please. La! sir, says the maid, who was a modest creature to be sure, the chimney smokes monstrously; you could not bear the room for three minutes together. By the greatest good luck there was a bundle of straw in the hearth, and I called for a candle. The candle came. Well! good woman, says I, since you won't light me a fire, I'll light one for myself; and in a moment the straw was all in a blaze. This quickly unkennelled the old fox; there he stood in an old rusty nightgown, blessing himself, and looking like — a — hem — egad."

He used to tell surprising stories of his activity when young. "Here I stand, gentlemen, that could once leap forty-two feet upon level ground, at three standing jumps, backward or forward. One, two, three, dart like an arrow out of a bow. But I am old now. I remember I once leaped for three hundred guineas with Count Klopstock, the great leaper, leaping-master to the Prince of Passau; you must all have heard of him. First he began with the running jump, and a most damnable bounce it was, that's certain. Everybody concluded that he had the match hollow, when, only taking off my hat, stripping off neither coat, shoes, nor stockings, mind me, I fetches a run, and went beyond him one foot, three inches and three-quarters, measured, upon my soul, by Captain Pately's own standard!"

But in this torrent of insipidity, there sometimes were found very severe satire, strokes of true wit, and lines of humour, *cum fluerent lutulentus*, etc. He rallied very successfully, for he never felt another's joke, and drove home his own without pity. With his superiors he was familiar and blunt. The inferiority of his station secured him from their resentment; but the same bluntness which they laughed at was by his equals regarded as

insolence — something like a familiar boot-catcher at an inn. A gentleman would bear that joke from him, for which a brother boot-catcher would knock him down.

Among other stories of Nash's telling, I remember one, which I the more cheerfully repeat, as it tends to correct a piece of impertinence that reigns in almost every country assembly. The principal inhabitants of a market-town at a distance from the capital, in order to encourage that harmony which ought to subsist in society, and to promote a mutual intercourse between the sexes, so desirable to both and so necessary for all, had established a monthly assembly in the town hall, which was conducted with such decency, decorum, and politeness, that it drew the attention of the gentlemen and ladies in the neighbourhood, and a nobleman and his family continually honoured them with their presence. This naturally drew others, and in time the room was crowded with what the world calls good company; and the assembly prospered, till some of the new admitted ladies took it into their heads that the tradesmen's daughters were unworthy of their notice, and therefore refused to join hands with them in the dance. This was complained of by the town

ladies, and that complaint was resented by the country gentlemen, who, more pert than wise, publicly advertised that they would not dance with tradesmen's daughters. This the most eminent tradesmen considered as an insult on themselves, and being men of worth, and able to live independently, they in return advertised that they would give no credit out of their town, and desired all others to discharge their accounts. A general uneasiness ensued; some writs were actually issued out, and much distress would have happened, had not my lord, who sided with no party, kindly interfered and composed the difference. The assembly, however, was ruined, and the families, I am told, are not friends yet, though this affair happened thirty years ago.

Nothing debases human nature so much as pride. . . . This Nash knew, and endeavoured to stifle every emotion of it at Bath. When he observed any ladies so extremely delicate and proud of a pedigree as to only touch the back of an inferior's hand in the dance, he always called to order, and desired them to leave the room or behave with common decency; and when any ladies and gentlemen drew off, after they had gone down a dance, without standing up till the dance

was finished, he made up to them, and after asking whether they had done dancing, told them they should dance no more unless they stood up for the rest; and on these occasions he always was as good as his word.

Nash, though no great wit, had the art of sometimes saying rude things with decency, and rendering them pleasing by an uncommon turn. But most of the good things attributed to him, which have found their way into the jest-books, are no better than puns. The smartest things I have seen are against him. One day in the grove he joined some ladies, and, asking one of them, who was crooked, whence she came, she replied, "Straight from London." "Confound me, madam," said he, "then you must have been damnably warped by the way."

She soon, however, had ample revenge. Sitting the following evening in one of the rooms, he once more joined her company, and with a sneer and bow asked her if she knew her catechism, and could tell the name of Tobit's dog. "His name, sir, was Nash," replied the lady, "and an impudent dog he was." This story is told in a celebrated romance;[1] I only repeat it here to have

[1] Smollett's "Roderick Random," chap. lv. — ED.

an opportunity of observing that it actually happened.

Queen Anne once asked him why he would not accept of knighthood. To which he replied, lest Sir William Read, the mountebank, who had been just knighted, should call him brother.

A house in Bath was said to be haunted by the devil, and a great noise was made about it, when Nash, going to the minister of St. Michael's, entreated him to drive the devil out of Bath for ever, if it were only to oblige the ladies.

Nash used sometimes to visit the great Doctor Clarke. The doctor was one day conversing with Locke and two or three more of his learned and intimate companions, with that freedom, gaiety, and cheerfulness, which is ever the result of innocence. In the midst of their mirth and laughter, the doctor, looking from the window, saw Nash's chariot stop at the door. "Boys, boys," cried the philosopher to his friends, "let us now be wise, for here is a fool coming." [1]

Nash was one day complaining in the following manner, to the Earl of Chesterfield, of his bad luck at play. "Would you think it, my lord, that

[1] Boswell tells the same story in his dedication of the "Life of Johnson" to Sir Joshua Reynolds (1791). — Ed.

d——d ——— Fortune, no later than last night, tricked me out of five hundred. Is it not surprising," continued he, "that my luck should never turn — that I should thus eternally be mauled?" "I don't wonder at your losing money, Nash," says his lordship, "but all the world is surprised where you get it to lose."

Doctor Cheyne once, when Nash was ill, drew up a prescription for him, which was sent in accordingly. The next day the doctor, coming to see his patient, found him up and well; upon which he asked if he had followed his prescription. "Followed your prescription," cried Nash, "no. Egad, if I had, I should have broke my neck, for I flung it out of the two pair of stairs window."

It would have been well had he confined himself to such sallies; but as he grew old he grew insolent, and seemed, in some measure, insensible of the pain his attempts to be a wit gave others. Upon asking a lady to dance a minuet, if she refused, he would often demand if she had got bandy legs. He would attempt to ridicule natural defects; he forgot the deference due to birth and quality, and mistook the manner of settling rank and precedence upon many occasions. He now

seemed no longer fashionable among the present race of gentry; he grew peevish and fretful, and they who only saw the remnant of a man severely returned that laughter upon him which he had once lavished upon others.

Poor Nash was no longer the gay, thoughtless, idly industrious creature he once was; he now forgot how to supply new modes of entertainment, and became too rigid to wind with ease through the vicissitudes of fashion. The evening of his life began to grow cloudy. His fortune was gone, and nothing but poverty lay in prospect. To embitter his hopes, he found himself abandoned by the great, whom he had long endeavoured to serve; and was obliged to fly to those of humbler stations for protection, whom he once affected to despise. He now began to want that charity which he had never refused to any; and to find that a life of dissipation and gaiety is ever terminated by misery and regret.

Even his place of master of the ceremonies (if I can trust the papers he has left behind him) was sought after. I would willingly be tender of any living reputation, but these papers accuse Mr. Quin of endeavouring to supplant him. He has even left us a letter, which he supposed was written

by that gentleman, soliciting a lord for his interest upon the occasion. As I choose to give Mr. Quin an opportunity of disproving this, I will insert the letter, and, to show the improbability of its being his, with all its faults both of style and spelling. I am the less apt to believe it written by Mr. Quin, as a gentleman who has mended Shakespeare's plays so often would surely be capable of something more correct than the following. It was sent, as it should seem, from Mr. Quin to a nobleman, but left open for the perusal of an intermediate friend. It was this friend who sent a copy of it to Mr. Nash, who caused it to be instantly printed and left among his other papers. The letter from the intermediate friend to Nash is as follows:

"London, Oct. 8, 1760.

"Dear Nash: — Two posts ago I received a letter from Quin, the old player, covering one to my lord, which he left open for my perusal, which, after reading, he desired I might seal up and deliver. The request he makes is so extraordinary, that it has induced me to send you the copy of his letter to my lord, which is as follows:

"'BATH, Oct. 3, 1760.

"'MY DER LORD:[1] — Old beaux Knash has meade himselfe so dissagreeable to all the company that comes here to Bath that the corperation of this city have it now under their consideration to remove him from being master of the cerey-moines, should he be continuead the inhabitants of this city will be rueind, as the best companey declines to come to Bath on his acct. Give me leave to show to your Lords'hip how he beheaved at the first ball he had here thiss season, which was

[1] Can any one who reads what precedes and what follows this letter suppose that we thought it was written by Mr. Quin, or that it would give any uneasiness either to him or his friends? The letter was really found among Mr. Nash's papers, as the editor can at any time prove, and it was inserted here to show what artifices were used by those who had more levity than good nature to impose upon a poor old man, and to embitter his last moments. This note has been rendered necessary by a piece of criticism without candour, and an epigram without wit which appeared on this occasion in the public papers. — *Goldsmith's note in the second edition.* [The criticism and epigram appeared in the *St. James's Magazine* (edited by R. Lloyd), 1762 (vol. i. p. 129). Goldsmith's explanation is sufficient, we think, to show his good faith in the matter, though no doubt he acted injudiciously in publishing the hoaxing letter in the lifetime of the old actor. Quin lived his last days in Bath, and died there in 1766. He retired from the stage in 1749, and was seventy-three when he died. His tomb in the abbey church has an epitaph by Garrick. — ED.]

Tus'day last. A younge Lady was as'ked to dance a minueat she begg the gent^m would be pleased to exquise here as' she did not chuse to dance; upon thiss old Nash called out so as to be head by all the companey in the room, "G—— dam yo, Madam, what buisness have yo here if yo do not dance," upon which the Lady was so afrighted, she rose and danced, the ress'et of the companey was so much offended at the rudness of Nash that not one Lady more would dance a minueat that night. In country dances no person of note danced except two boys, Lords S—— and T—— the res't of the companey that danced waire only the families of all the haberdas'hers machinnkes and innkeepers in the three kingdoms brushed up and colexted togither. I have known upon such an occaison as thiss seventeen Dutchess' and Contiss' to be at the opening of the ball at Bath now not one. This man by his' pride and extravagancis has outlived his reasein it would be happy for thiss city that he was ded; and is now only fitt to reed Shirlock upon death by which he may seave his soul and gaine more than all the proffitts he can make, by his white hatt, suppose it was to be died red: The fav^r I have now to reques't by which I now have wrote yo, is that your Lordship will speke to Mr.

Pitt, for to recommend me to the corporeatian of this city to succede this old sinner as master of the cerremonies, and yo will much oblige, my Lord,

"'Your Lord^{s} and Hu^{e} Ob^{t} Serv^{t}.'

"N. B. There were some other private matters and offers in Quin's letter to my lord, which do not relate to you."

Here Nash, if I may be permitted the use of a polite and fashionable phrase, was humm'd; but he experienced such rubs as these, and a thousand other mortifications, every day.[1] He found poverty now denied him the indulgence not only of his favourite follies, but of his favourite virtues. The poor now solicited him in vain, for he was himself a more pitiable object than they. The child of the public seldom has a friend, and he who once exercised his wit at the expense of others must naturally have enemies. Exasperated at last to the highest degree, an unaccountable whim struck him. Poor Nash was resolved to become

[1] All this concerning the supposed letter of Quin, excepting Goldsmith's note, appeared in the first edition; yet it is omitted by Prior. — Ed.

an author; he who, in the vigour of manhood, was incapable of the task, now at the impotent age of eighty-six was determined to write his own history! From the many specimens already given of his style, the reader will not much regret that the historian was interrupted in his design. Yet, as Montaigne observes, as the adventures of an infant, if an infant could inform us of them, would be pleasing, so the life of a beau, if a beau could write, would certainly serve to regale curiosity.

Whether he really intended to put this design in execution, or did it only to alarm the nobility, I will not take upon me to determine; but certain it is, that his friends went about collecting subscriptions for the work, and he received several encouragements from such as were willing to be politely charitable. It was thought by many, that this history would reveal the intrigues of a whole age; that he had numberless secrets to disclose; but they never considered that persons of public character like him were the most unlikely in the world to be made partakers of those secrets which people desired the public should not know. In fact, he had few secrets to discover, and those he had are now buried with him in the grave.

He was now past the power of giving or re-

ceiving pleasure, for he was poor, old and peevish; yet still he was incapable of turning from his former manner of life to pursue happiness. The old man endeavoured to practise the follies of the boy; he spurred on his jaded passions after every trifle of the day; tottering with age, he would be ever an unwelcome guest in the assemblies of the youthful and gay, and he seemed willing to find lost appetite among those scenes where he was once young.

An old man thus striving after pleasure is indeed an object of pity; but a man at once old and poor, running on in this pursuit, might excite astonishment. To see a being both by fortune and constitution rendered incapable of enjoyment still haunting those pleasures he was no longer to share in; to see one of almost ninety settling the fashion of a lady's cap, or assigning her place in a country dance; to see him, unmindful of his own reverend figure, or the respect he should have for himself, toasting demireps, or attempting to entertain the lewd and idle, — a sight like this might well serve as a satire on humanity; might show that man is the only preposterous creature alive who pursues the shadow of pleasure without temptation.

But he was not permitted to run on thus with-

out severe and repeated reproof. The clergy sent him frequent calls to reformation; but the asperity of their advice in general abated its intended effects. They threatened him with fire and brimstone for what he had long been taught to consider as foibles, and not vices; so, like a desperate debtor, he did not care to settle an account, that, upon the first inspection, he found himself utterly unable to pay. Thus begins one of his monitors:

"This admonition comes from your friend, and one that has your interest deeply at heart. It comes on a design altogether important, and of no less consequence than your everlasting happiness, so that it may justly challenge your careful regard. It is not to upbraid or reproach, much less to triumph or insult over your misconduct or misery; no, 'tis pure benevolence, it is disinterested goodwill, prompts me to write. I hope, therefore, I shall not raise your resentment. Yet, be the consequence what it will, I cannot bear to see you walk in the paths that lead to death without warning you of the danger, without sounding in your ear the awful [1] admonition, 'Return and live! Why do you such things? I hear of your evil

[1] Both first and second editions have "lawful," which is most likely a misprint. — ED.

dealings by all this people.' I have long observed and pitied you, and must tell you plainly, sir, that your present behaviour is not the way to reconcile yourself to God. You are so far from making atonement to offended justice that each moment you are aggravating the future account, and heaping up an increase of his anger. As long as you roll on in a continued circle of sensual delights and vain entertainments, you are dead to all the purposes of piety and virtue. You are as odious to God as a corrupt carcass that lies putrefying in the churchyard. You are as far from doing your duty, or endeavouring after salvation, or restoring yourself to the divine favour, as a heap of dry bones nailed up in a coffin is from vigour and activity. . . . Think, sir, I conjure you, think upon this, if you have any inclination to escape the fire that will never be quenched. Would you be rescued from the fury and fierce anger of God? Would you be delivered from weeping and wailing, and incessant gnashing of teeth? Sure you would! But be certain that this will never be done by amusements which at best are trifling and impertinent, and for that, if for no other reason, foolish and sinful. 'Tis by seriousness, 'tis by retirement and mourning, you must accomplish this great and

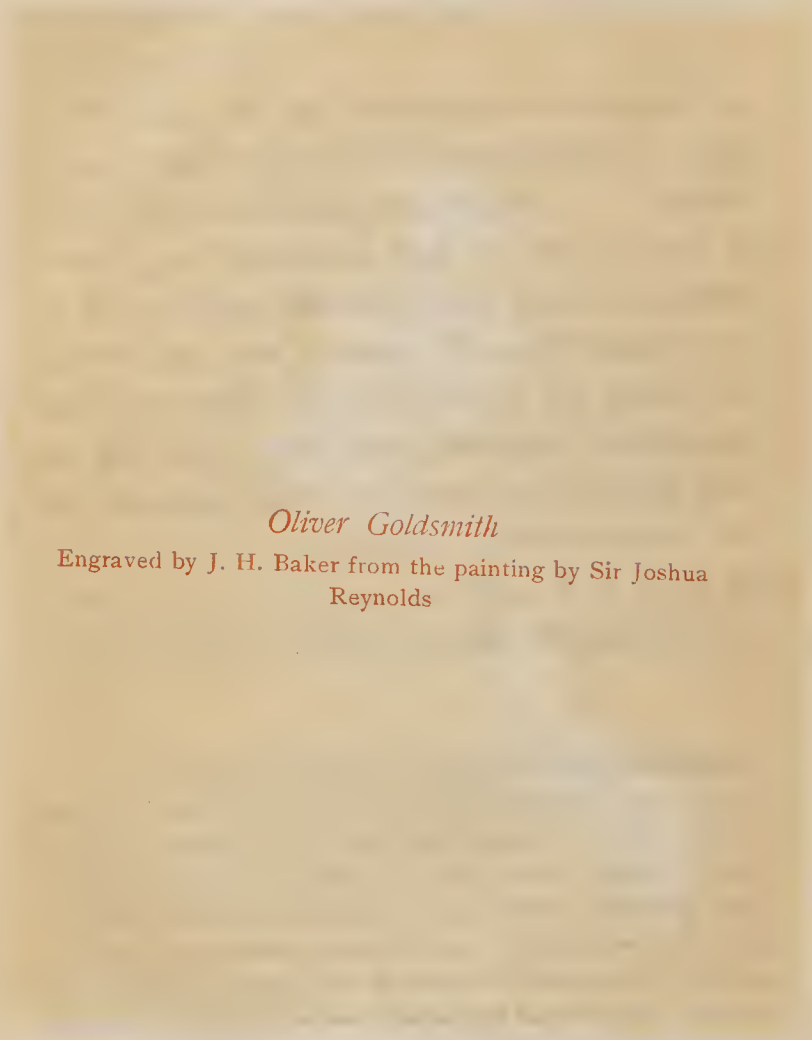
desirable deliverance. You must not appear at the head of every silly diversion, you must enter into your closet and shut the door, — commune with your own heart and search out its defects. The pride of life and all its superfluity of follies must be put away. You must make haste, and delay not, to keep every injunction of heaven. You must always remember that mighty sinners must be mightily penitent, or else mightily tormented. Your example and your projects have been extremely prejudicial — I wish I could not say fatal and destructive — to many. For this there is no amends but an alteration of your conduct, as signal and remarkable as your person and name. If you do not by this method remedy in some degree the evils that you have sent abroad, and prevent the mischievous consequences that may ensue . . . wretched will you be, wretched above all men to eternity. The blood of souls will be laid to your charge. God's jealousy, like a consuming flame, will smoke against you; as you yourself will see in that day, when the mountains shall quake, and the hills melt, and the earth be burnt up at his presence.

"Once more, then, I exhort you as a friend, I beseech you as a brother, I charge you as a mes-

senger from God in his own most solemn words, 'Cast away from you your transgressions, make you a new heart, and a new spirit; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.'

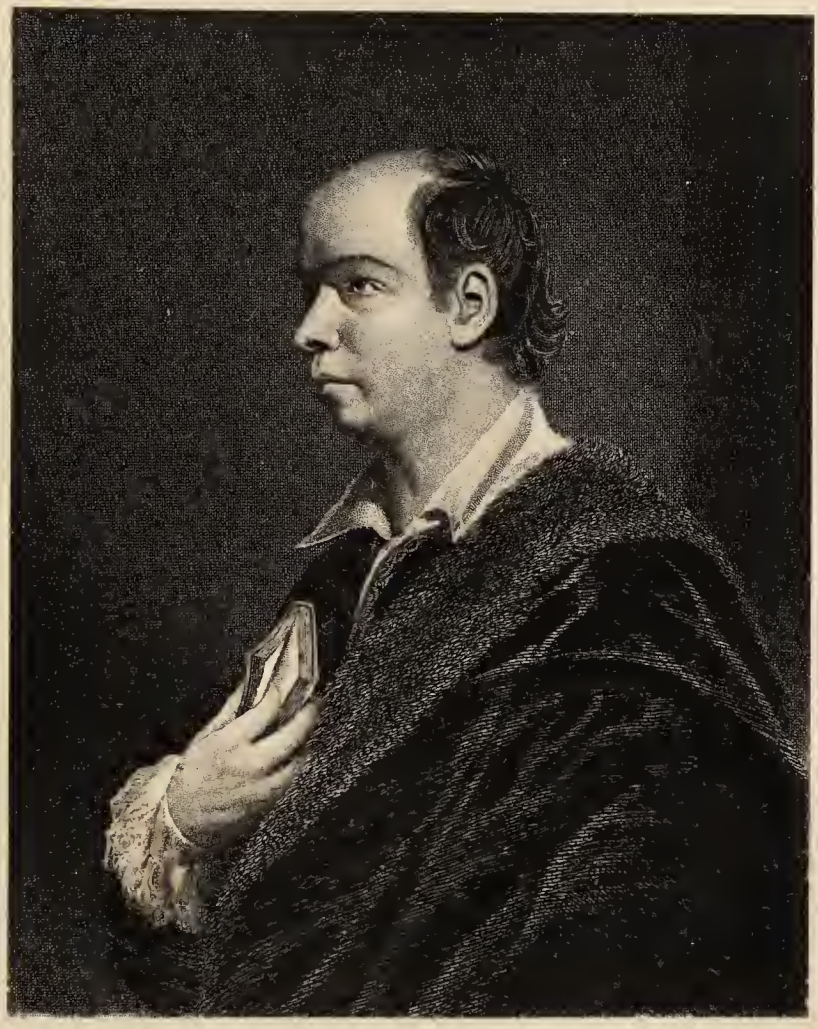
"Perhaps you may be disposed to contemn this, and its serious purport, or to recommend it to your companions as a subject for raillery. . . . Yet let me tell you beforehand, that for this, as well as for other things, God will bring you to judgment. He sees me now I write. He will observe you while you read. He notes down my words; he will also note down your consequent procedure. Not then upon me — not upon me, but upon your own soul will the neglecting or the despising my sayings turn. 'If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.'" [1]

[1] Prior omits this admonition, though it is in both Goldsmith's editions. After it in the text of the first edition came the following paragraph. It is a very hearty defence of Nash, and was, perhaps, accidentally omitted from the second edition: "Such repeated admonitions served to sting, without reforming him; they made him morose, but not pious. The dose was too strong for the patient to bear. He should have been met with smiles, and allured into reformation, if indeed he was criminal. But, in the name of piety, what was there criminal in his conduct? He had long been taught to consider his trifling profession as a very serious and important business. He went through his office



Oliver Goldsmith

Engraved by J. H. Baker from the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds



Thus we see a variety of causes concurred to embitter his departing life. The weakness and infirmities of exhausted nature; the admonitions of the grave, who aggravated his follies into vices; the ingratitude of his dependants, who formerly flattered his fortunes; but particularly the contempt of the great, many of whom quite forgot him in his wants, — all these hung upon his spirits and soured his temper, and the poor man of pleasure might have terminated his life very tragically, had not the corporation of Bath charitably resolved to grant him ten guineas the first Monday of every month. This bounty served to keep him from actual necessity, though far too trifling to enable him to support the character of a gentleman. Habit, and not nature, makes almost all our wants; and he who had been accustomed in the early parts of life to affluence and prodigality, when reduced to a hundred and twenty-six pounds a year must pine in actual indigence.

In this variety of uneasiness his health began

with great gravity, solemnity, and care; why then denounce peculiar torments against a poor harmless creature, who did a thousand good things, and whose greatest vice was vanity? He deserved ridicule, indeed, and he found it; but scarce a single action of his life, except one, deserves the asperity of reproach." — Ed.

to fail. He had received from nature a robust and happy constitution, that was scarce even to be impaired by intemperance. He even pretended, among his friends, that he never followed a single prescription in his life. However, in this he was one day detected on the parade; for boasting there of his contempt and utter disuse of medicine, unluckily the water of two blisters, which Doctor Oliver had prescribed, and which he then had upon each leg, oozed through his stockings, and betrayed him. His aversion to physic, however, was frequently a topic of raillery between him and Doctor Cheyne, who was a man of some wit and breeding. When Cheyne recommended his vegetable diet, Nash would swear that his design was to send half the world grazing like Nebuchadnezzar. "Ay," Cheyne would reply, "Nebuchadnezzar was never such an infidel as thou art. It was but last week, gentlemen, that I attended this fellow in a fit of sickness; there I found him rolling up his eyes to heaven, and crying for mercy. He would then swallow my drugs like breast milk. Yet you now hear him, how the old dog blasphemes the faculty." What Cheyne said in jest was true; he feared the approaches of death more than the generality of mankind, and was generally

very devout while it threatened him. Though he was somewhat the libertine in action,[1] none believed or trembled more than he; for a mind neither schooled by philosophy nor encouraged by conscious innocence is ever timid at the appearance of danger.

For some time before his decease nature gave warning of his approaching dissolution. The worn machine had run itself down to an utter impossibility of repair; he saw that he must die, and shuddered at the thought. His virtues were not of the great, but the amiable kind, so that fortitude was not among the number. Anxious, timid, his thoughts still hanging on a receding world, he desired to enjoy a little longer that life, the miseries of which he had experienced so long. The poor unsuccessful gamester husbanded the wasting moments with an increased desire to continue the game, and to the last eagerly wished for one yet more happy throw. He died at his house in St. John's Court, Bath, on the 12th of February, 1761, aged eighty-seven years, three months, and some days.[2]

[1] Though both the author's editions have "action," Prior and Cunningham have preferred to read "words." — ED.

[2] Here, as in the first edition, Goldsmith attached a foot-note as follows: "This account of his age, which contradicts that

His death was sincerely regretted by the city, to which he had been so long and so great a benefactor. The day after he died, the mayor of Bath called the corporation together, when they granted fifty pounds toward burying their sovereign with proper respect.[1] After the corpse had lain four days, it was conveyed to the abbey church in that city, with a solemnity somewhat peculiar to his character. About five the procession moved from his house; the charity girls, two and two, pre-

given us by Doctor Oliver, was copied from Mr. Nash's own handwriting by George Scott, Esq., from a book in the possession of Mr. Charles Morgan, at his coffee-house at Bath." The note was not given in the second edition. It will be seen, at p. 156, that Doctor Oliver's date of Nash's death is February 13th. Tunstall ("Rambles about Bath," 1848), has February 12th. Warner, Britton, and Peach give the date as February 3d, and Goldsmith himself gave February 3d in his first edition, but this he altered to February 12th in a list of "Errata" at the end of that edition. See also p. 196. — ED.

[1] Mr. Peach gives the following extract from the Corporation Minute Book: "1761, February 14. Atwood, Mayor. 'Shall the funeral of Mr. Nash be defrayed at the expense of the Chamber, at a sum not exceeding fifty guineas, under the direction of Mr. Mayor and Mr. Chamberlain? Yes.'" This agrees better with Goldsmith's and Oliver's and Tunstall's dates of the death — the 12th and 13th of February — than with Mr. Peach's own date, February 3d (which is also Warner's and Britton's date); for if Nash died on February 3d, the 14th of that month would be rather a long date after to be deciding upon his funeral. — ED.

ceded; next the boys of the charity school, singing a solemn occasional hymn.[1] Next marched the city music and his own band, sounding at proper intervals a dirge. Three clergymen immediately

[1] THE HYMN SUNG AT HIS FUNERAL.

I.

Most unhappy are we here,
Full of sin and full of fear,
Ever weary, ne'er at rest,
When, O Lord, shall we be blest?

II.

Earth's a clog, a pageant life,
Fill'd with folly, guilt, and strife;
'Till we all unite in thee,
With ourselves we disagree.

III.

What's our comfort here below,
Empty bubble, transient show;
Wrapt in the body's vile disguise,
None truly is until he dies.

IV.

Here we dwell, but not at home,
To other worlds ordained to roam;
Yet still we seek for joys that waste,
Fleeting as the vernal blast.

V.

Lord, remove these shadows hence,
Give us faith instead of sense;
Teach us here in life to die,
That we may live eternally.

Goldsmith's note. [In both Goldsmith's editions, but not given by Prior. — ED.]

preceded the coffin, which was adorned with sable plumes, and the pall supported by the six senior aldermen. The masters of the assembly-rooms followed as chief mourners; the beadles of that hospital which he had contributed so largely to endow, went next; and last of all the poor patients themselves, the lame, the emaciated, and the feeble, followed their old benefactor to his grave, shedding unfeigned tears, and lamenting themselves in him.

The crowd was so great, that not only the streets were filled, but, as one of the journals in a rant expresses it, "even the tops of the houses were covered with spectators. Each thought the occasion affected themselves most; as when a real king dies, they asked each other, 'Where shall we find such another?' Sorrow sate upon every face, and even children lisped that their sovereign was no more. The awfulness of the solemnity made the deepest impression on the minds of the distressed inhabitants. The peasant discontinued his toil, the ox rested from the plough; all nature seemed to sympathise with their loss, and the muffled bells rung a peal of bob-majors." [1]

[1] In 1790 the monument in the abbey church was erected. It has an epitaph by Doctor Harrington, who was the chief promoter of the erection. — Ed.

Our deepest solemnities have something truly ridiculous in them. There is somewhat ludicrous in the folly of historians, who thus declaim upon the death of kings and princes, as if there was anything dismal, or anything unusual in it. "For my part," says Poggi, the Florentine, "I can no more grieve for another's death than I could for my own. I have ever regarded death as a very trifling affair, nor can black staves, long cloaks, or mourning coaches in the least influence my spirits. Let us live here as long and as merrily as we can, and when we must die, why let us die merrily, too, but die so as to be happy."

The few things he was possessed of were left to his relations. A small library of well-chosen books, some trinkets and pictures, were his only inheritance. Among the latter (besides the box given to him by the Prince of Wales), were a gold box, which was presented to him by the Countess of Burlington,[1] with Lady Euston's picture in the lid, an *étui*,[2] mounted in gold, with a diamond to

[1] The first edition has "late Countess of Burlington." — ED.

[2] The first edition has "an agate etui." Old Briggs, in Miss Burney's "Cecilia," says: "And now pray how does he cut up? What has he left behind him? A *twey*-case, I suppose," etc.; and Mrs. Ellis in a note to the passage explains that: "An *étui* is a closely fitting case for anything, from a hat down to needles.

open it, and ornamented with another diamond at the top, given him by the Princess Dowager of Wales. He had also a silver terene, which was given him by the Princess Amelia, and[1] some other things of no great value. The rings, watches, and pictures, which he formerly received from others, would have come to a considerable amount; but these his necessities had obliged him to dispose of. Some family pictures, however, remained, which were sold by advertisement, for five guineas each, after Mr. Nash's decease.

It was natural to expect that the death of a person so long in the eye of the public must have produced a desire in several to delineate his character, or deplore his loss. He was scarce dead when the public papers were filled with elegies, groans, and characters; and before he was buried there were epitaphs ready made to inscribe on his stone. I remember one of those character writers, and a very grave one, too, after observing, alas! that Richard Nash, Esq., was no more, went on to assure us, that he was "sagacious, debonair, and

A gentleman's '*twey case*' was most likely a narrow, oblong pocket-case, containing a little mirror, tweezers, and so forth." — Ed.

[1] Not in the first edition. — Ed.

commode;" and concluded with gravely declaring that "impotent posterity would in vain fumble to produce his fellow." Another, equally sorrowful, gave us to know "that he was indeed a man;" an assertion which I fancy none will be so hardy as to contradict. But the merriest of all the lamentations made upon this occasion was that where he is called "a constellation of the heavenly sphere."

One thing, however, is common almost with all of them; and that is, that Venus, Cupid, and the Graces are commanded to weep, and that Bath shall never find such another. But though he was satirised with the praises of those, yet there were some of real abilities who undertook to do justice to his character, to praise him for his virtues, and acknowledge his faults. I need scarcely mention that Doctor Oliver and Doctor King are of this number. They had honoured him with their friendship while living, and undertook to honour his memory when dead. As the reader may choose to compare their efforts upon the same subject, I have subjoined them, and perhaps many will find in either enough, upon so unimportant a subject as Mr. Nash's life, to satisfy curiosity. The first published was that by Doctor

Oliver,[1] written with much good sense, and still more good nature. But the reader will consider that he has assumed in his motto the character of a panegyrist, and spares his friend's faults, though he was too candid entirely to pass them over in silence:

A FAINT SKETCH OF THE LIFE, CHARACTER, AND MANNERS OF THE LATE MR. NASH.[2]

Imperium in Imperio. —
De mortuis nil nisi bonum.

BATH, February 13, 1761.

This morning died[3]

RICHARD NASH, ESQUIRE,

Aged eighty-eight.

He was by birth a gentleman, an ancient Briton;[4] By education, a student of Jesus College in Oxford;

[1] Dr. William Oliver, a physician of Bath, the second of that name. He was also a man of literary taste and talents, and published, among other things, "A Practical Treatise on the Use and Abuse of Warm Baths." He died in 1764. See also note at p. 196. — ED.

[2] Bath, printed for John Keene, in King's Mead Street, and sold by W. Kingston, on Trim Bridge, 4to, price three-pence. — ED.

[3] See other dates put forth as the death date, pp. 149, 150, 196. — ED.

[4] This and the following epitaph are so long that we have

By profession . . . His natural genius was too volatile for any. He tried the army and the law; But soon found his mind superior to both — He was born to govern. Nor was his dominion, like that of other legislators, Over the servility of the vulgar, But over the pride of the noble and the opulent. His public character was great, As it was self-built and self-maintained: His private amiable, As it was grateful, beneficent, and generous. By the force of genius He erected the city of Bath into a province of pleasure, And became, by universal consent, Its legislator and ruler. He plann'd, improv'd, and regulated all the amusements of the place; His fundamental law was, that of good breeding; Hold sacred decency and decorum, His constant maxim: Nobody, however exalted, By beauty, blood, titles, or riches, Could be guilty of a breach of it, unpunished — The penalty, his disapprobation and public shame. To maintain the sovereignty he had established, He published Rules of Behaviour, Which from their propriety, acquired the force of laws; And which the highest never infring'd without immediately undergoing The public censure. He kept the Men in order; By wisely prohibiting the wearing swords in his dominions; By which means He prevented sudden passion from causing The bitterness of unavailing repentance. In all quarrels he was chosen Umpire — And so just

made the lines "run on," to save space. The commencement of each line in the originals, however, may be distinguished by the capital letters. — Ed.

were his decisions, That peace generally triumphed, Crowned with the mutual thanks of both parties. He kept the Ladies in good-humour, and decorum; By a nice observance of the rules of place and precedence; By ordaining scandal to be the infallible mark Of a foolish head and a malicious heart, Always rendering more suspicious The reputation of her who propagated it, Than that of the person abused. Of the young, the gay, the heedless fair, Just launching upon the dangerous sea of pleasure, He was ever, unsolicited (sometimes unregarded) The kind protector: Humanely correcting even their mistakes in dress, As well as improprieties in conduct: Nay, often warning them, Though at the hazard of his life, Against the artful snares of designing men, Or an improper acquaintance with women of doubtful characters. Thus did he establish his government on pillars Of honour and politeness, Which could never be shaken: And maintained it, for full half a century, With reputation, honour, and undisputed authority; Beloved, respected, and revered.

Of his private character, be it the first praise, That while, by his conduct, the highest ranks became his subjects, He himself became The servant of the poor and the distressed: Whose cause he ever pleaded amongst the rich, And enforced with the prevailing eloquence of a good example: They were ashamed not to relieve those wants To which they saw him administer with So noble a heart, and so liberal a hand. Nor was his munificence confined to particulars, He

being, to all the public charities of this city, A liberal benefactor; Not only by his own most generous subscriptions, But, by always assuming, in their behalf, the character of A sturdy beggar; Which he performed with such an authoritative address To all ranks, without distinction, That few of the worst hearts had courage to refuse, What their own inclinations would not have prompted them to bestow. Of a noble public spirit And A warm grateful heart, The obelisk in the Grove, And The beautiful needle in the Square, Are magnificent testimonies. The One By him erected to preserve the memory of a Most interesting event to his country, The restitution of health, by the healing waters of this place, To the illustrious Prince of Orange, Who came hither in a most languishing condition: The Other, A noble offering of thanks, To the late Prince of Wales,[1] and his royal Consort, For favours bestowed, And honours by them conferred on this city.

His long and peaceful reign, of Absolute power, Was so tempered by his Excessive good-nature, That no instance can be given either of his own cruelty, Or of his suffering that of others to escape Its proper reward: Example unprecedented amongst absolute monarchs.

READER. This monarch was a man. And had his foibles, and his faults; Which we would wish covered with the veil of good-nature, Made of the same piece with his own: But, truth forceth us unwillingly to con-

[1] Prince Frederick, son of George II., who died in 1751. — ED.

fess, His passions were strong; Which, as they fired him to act strenuously in good, Hurried him to some excesses of evil. His fire, not used to be kept under by an early restraint, Burst out too often into flaming acts, Without waiting for the cool approbation of his judgment. His generosity was so great, That prudence often whispered him, in vain, That she feared it would enter the neighbouring confines of profusion: His charity so unbounded, That the severe might suspect it sometimes to be The offspring of folly, or ostentation. With all these, be they foibles, follies, faults, or frailties, It will be difficult to point out, amongst his cotemporary Kings of the whole earth, More than One Who hath fewer, or less pernicious to mankind. His existence (For life it scarcely might be called) Was spun out to so great an age, that The man Was sunk, like many former heroes, in The weakness and infirmities of exhausted nature; The unwilling tax all animals must pay For multiplicity of days. Over his closing scene, Charity long spread her all-covering mantle, And dropped the curtain, Before the poor actor, though he had[1] played his part, Was permitted to quit the stage. Now may she protect his memory! Every friend of Bath, Every lover of decency, decorum, and good breeding, Must sincerely deplore The loss of so excellent a governor; And join in the most fervent wishes (would I could say hopes) That there may soon be found a man Able and worthy, To succeed him.[2]

[1] "Had" is inserted from the first edition. — Ed.

[2] Samuel Derrick, whom Doctor Johnson spoke kindly of,

The reader sees in what alluring colours Mr. Nash's character is drawn; but he must consider that an intimate friend held the pencil; the doctor professes to say nothing of the dead but what was good, and such a maxim, though it serves his departed friend, is but badly calculated to improve the living. Doctor King,[1] in his epitaph, however, is still more indulgent; he produces him as an example to kings, and prefers his laws even to those of Solon or Lycurgus.

EPITAPHIUM RICHARDI NASH, ARMIGERI.

H. S. E.

RICHARDUS NASH,

Obscuro loco natus, Et nullis ortus majoribus: Cui tamen (O rem miram, et incredibilem!) Regnum opulentissimum florentissimumque Plebs, proceres, principes, Liberis suis suffragiis Ultrò detulerunt, Quod et ipse summâ cum dignitate tenuit, Annos plus quinquaginta, Universo populo consentiente, approbante, plaudente. Una voce præterea, unoque om-

and who was Boswell's "first tutor in the ways of London," succeeded Nash as Master of the Ceremonies of Bath. See, however, p. 195. Derrick died in 1769. — ED.

[1] Dr. William King, Doctor Johnson's Jacobite friend, and the author of "The Toast," a political satire, published anonymously, "Anecdotes of His Own Times," etc. He died Dec. 30, 1763. See note, p. 196. — ED.

nium ordinum consensu, Ad imperium suum adjuncta est Magni nominis [1] Provincia: Quam admirabili consilio et ratione Per se, non unquam per legatos, administravit; Eam quotannis invisere dignatus, Et apud provinciales, quoad necesse fuit, Solitus manere. In tantâ fortunâ Neque fastu turgidus Rex incessu patuit, Neque, tyrannorum more, se jussit coli, Aut amplos honores, titulosque sibi arrogavit; Sed cuncta insignia, etiam regium diadema rejiciens, Caput contentus fuit ornare GALERO ALBO, Manifesto animi sui candoris signo. LEGISLATOR prudentissimus Vel Solone et Lycurgo illustrior, Leges, quascunque voluit, Statuit, fixit, promulgavit; Omnes quidem cùm civibus suis, Tum verò hospitibus, advenis, peregrinis Gratas, jucundas, utiles. VOLUPTATUM arbiter et minister, Sed gravis, sed elegans, sed urbanus, Et in summâ comitate satìs adhibens severitatis, Imprimis curavit, Ut in virorum et fœminarum cœtibus Nequis impudenter faceret, Neque in iis quod inesset Impuritatis, clamoris, tumulti. CIVITATEM hanc celeberrimam, Delicias suas, Non modò pulcherrimis ædificiis auxit, Sed præclarâ disciplinâ et moribus ornavit: Quippe nemo quisquam To PREPON melius intellexit, excoluit, docuit. JUSTUS, liberalis, benignus, facetus, Atque amicus omnibus, præcipuè miseris et egenis, Nullos habuit inimicos, Præter magnos quosdam ardeliones, Et declamatores eos tristes et fanaticos, Qui generi humano sunt inimicissimi. PACIS et patriæ amans, Concordiam, felicem et perpetuam, In regno suo con-

[1] Tunbridge. — *Note by Goldsmith.*

stituit, Usque adeò, Ut nullus alteri petulanter maledicere, Aut facto nocere auderet; Neque, tanquam sibi metuens, In publicum armatus prodire. FUIT quanquam potentissimus, Omnia arbitrio suo gubernans: Haud tamen ipsa libertas Magìs usquam floruit Gratiâ, gloriâ, auctoritate. Singulare enim temperamentum invenit, (Rem magnæ cogitationis, Et rerum omnium fortasse difficillimam) Quo ignobiles cum nobilibus, pauperes cum divitibus, Indocti cum doctissimis, ignavi cum fortissimis Æquari se putarent, REX OMNIBUS IDEM. QUICQUID PECCAVERIT, (Nam peccamus omnes) In seipsum magìs, quàm in alios, Et errore, aut imprudentiâ magìs quam scelere, aut improbitate. Peccavit; Nusquam verô ignoratione decori, aut honesti, Neque ità quidem usquam, Ut non veniam ab humanis omnibus Facilè impetrârit. HUJUS vitæ morumque exemplar Si cæteri reges, regulique, Et quotquot sunt regnorum præfecti, Imitarentur; (Utinam! iterumque utinam!) Et ipsi essent beati, Et cunctæ orbis regiones beatissimæ. TALEM virum, tantumque ademptum Lugeant musæ, charitesque! Lugeant Veneres, Cupidinesque! Lugeant omnes juvenum et nympharum chori! Tu verò, O BATHONIA, Ne cesses tuum lugere Principem, præceptorem, amicum, patronum; Heu, heu, nunquam posthàc Habitura parem!

The following translation of this epitaph will give the English reader an idea of its contents, though not of its elegance:

THE EPITAPH OF RICHARD NASH, ESQ.

Here lies

RICHARD NASH,

Born in an obscure village, And from mean ancestors. To whom, however, Strange to relate, Both the vulgar and the mighty, Without bribe or compulsion, Unanimously gave A kingdom, equally rich and flourishing. A kingdom which he governed More than fifty years, With universal approbation and applause. To his empire also was added, By the consent of all orders, A celebrated province [1] Which he ever swayed with great prudence, Not by delegated power, but in person. He deigned to visit it every year, And while the necessities of state demanded his presence, He usually continued there. In such greatness of fortune His pride discovered itself by no marks of dignity; Nor did he ever claim the honours of prostration. Despising at once titles of adulation, And laying aside all royal splendour, Wearing not even the diadem, He was content with being distinguish'd only by the ornamental ensign Of a white hat; a symbol of the candour of his mind. He was a most prudent legislator, And more remarkable even than Solon or Lycurgus. He at once established and authorised Whatever laws were thought convenient, Which were equally serviceable to the city, And grateful to strangers, Who made it their abode. He was at once a provider and a

[1] Tunbridge.—*Note by Goldsmith.*

judge of pleasures, But still conducted them with gravity and elegance, And repress'd licentiousness with severity. His chief care was employed, In preventing obscenity or impudence From offending the modesty or the morals Of the Fair Sex. And in banishing from their Assemblies Tumult, clamour, and abuse. He not only adorned this city, Which he loved, With beautiful structures, But improved it by his example ; As no man knew, no man taught, what was becoming Better than he. He was just, liberal, kind, and facetious ; A friend to all, but particularly to the poor. He had no enemies, Except some of the trifling great, Or dull declaimers, foes to all mankind. Equally a lover of peace and of his country, He fix'd a happy and lasting concord In his kingdom, So that none dare convey scandal, or injure by open violence the universal peace, Or even by carrying arms appear prepar'd for war, With impunity. But though his power was boundless, Yet never did liberty flourish more ; which he promoted, Both by his authority, and cultivated for his fame. He found out the happy secret (A thing not to be considered without surprise) Of uniting the vulgar and the great, The poor and the rich, The learn'd and ignorant, The cowardly and the brave, In the bonds of society, an equal king to all. Whatever his faults were, For we all have faults, They were rather obnoxious to himself than others ; they arose neither from imprudence nor mistake, Never from dishonesty or corrupt principle, But so harmless were they, That though they fail'd to create our esteem, Yet

can they not want our pardon. Could other kings and governors But learn to imitate his example (Would to heaven they could !), Then might they see themselves happy, And their people still enjoying more true felicity. Ye Muses and Graces mourn His death ; Ye powers of Love, ye choirs of youth and virgins, But thou, O Bathonia ! more than the rest, Cease not to weep, Your king, your teacher, patron, friend, Never, ah, never, to behold His equal.

Whatever might have been justly observed of Mr. Nash's superiority as a governor, at least it may be said that few cotemporary kings have met with such able panegyrists. The former enumerates all his good qualities with tenderness, and the latter enforces them with impetuosity. They both seem to have loved him, and honourably paid his remains the last debt of friendship. But a cool biographer, unbiassed by resentment or regard, will probably find nothing in the man either truly great, or strongly vicious. His virtues were all amiable, and more adapted to procure friends than admirers ; they were more capable of raising love than esteem. He was naturally endued with good sense ; but by having been long accustomed to pursue trifles, his mind shrunk to the size of the little objects on which it was employed. His

generosity was boundless, because his tenderness and his vanity were in equal proportion; the one impelling him to relieve misery, and the other to make his benefactions known. In all his actions, however virtuous, he was guided by sensation and not by reason; so that the uppermost passion was ever sure to prevail. His being constantly in company had made him an easy though not a polite companion. He chose to be thought rather an odd fellow than a well-bred man; perhaps that mixture of respect and ridicule with which his mock royalty was treated first inspired him with this resolution. The foundations of his empire were laid in vicious compliance, the continuance of his reign was supported by a virtuous impartiality. In the beginning of his authority, he in reality obeyed those whom he pretended to govern; toward the end, he attempted to extort a real obedience from his subjects, and supported his right by prescription. Like a monarch Tacitus talks of, they complied with him at first because they loved, they obeyed him at last because they feared him. He often led the rich into new follies in order to promote the happiness of the poor, and served the one at the expense of the other. Whatever his vices were, they were of use to society, and this neither

Petronius, nor Apicius, nor Tigellius, nor any other professed voluptuary could say. To set him up, as some do, for a pattern of imitation, is wrong, since all his virtues received a tincture from the neighbouring folly; to denounce peculiar judgments against him is equally unjust, as his faults raise rather our mirth than our detestation. He was fitted for the station in which fortune placed him. It required no great abilities to fill it, and few of great abilities but would have disdained the employment. He led a life of vanity, and long mistook it for happiness. Unfortunately, he was taught at last to know that a man of pleasure leads the most unpleasant life in the world.[1]

A letter from Mr. ——— in Tunbridge to Lord ——— in London; found among the Papers of Mr. Nash, and prepared by him for the press.[2]

"My Lord: — What I foresaw has arrived, poor Jenners, after losing all his fortune, has shot

[1] This summary of Beau Nash's character hardly warrants Mr. Peach's dictum that "Goldsmith's 'Life of Nash' is a vast apology." The concluding sentiment is also in the Voltaire memoir, vol. iv. p. 42. — Ed.

[2] The letter thus introduced, judging by the evidence of style, was written by Goldsmith himself. It has all his manner; the

himself through the head. His losses to Bland were considerable, and his playing soon after with Spedding contributed to hasten his ruin. No man was ever more enamoured with play, or understood it less. At whatever game he ventured his money, he was most usually the dupe, and still foolishly attributed to his bad luck those misfortunes that entirely proceeded from his want of judgment.

"After finding that he had brought on himself irreparable indigence and contempt, his temper, formerly so sprightly, began to grow gloomy and unequal; he grew more fond of solitude, and more liable to take offence at supposed injuries; in short, for a week before he shot himself, his friends were of opinion that he meditated some such horrid design. He was found in his chamber fallen on the floor, the bullet having glanced on the bone, and lodged behind his right eye.

"You remember, my lord, what a charming fellow this deluded man was once. How benevolent, just, temperate, and every way virtuous; the

names and anecdotes mentioned were either fictitious, or probably gleaned from sources pretty generally known. — *Prior*. [If Prior is right here, the letter has a curious bearing upon the stories which would have us believe that Goldsmith himself had an inordinate liking for the gaming-table. See the "Citizen," Letter lxx., and elsewhere. — ED.]

only faults of his mind arose from motives of humanity: he was too easy, credulous, and good-natured, and unable to resist temptation, when recommended by the voice of friendship. These foibles the vicious and the needy soon perceived, and what was at first a weakness they soon perverted into guilt; he became a gamester, and continued the infamous profession till he could support the miseries it brought with it no longer.

"I have often been not a little concerned to see the first introduction of a young man of fortune to the gaming-table. With what eagerness his company is courted by the whole fraternity of sharpers; how they find out his most latent wishes, in order to make way to his affections by gratifying them, and continue to hang upon him with the meanest degree of condescension. The youthful dupe no way suspecting, imagines himself surrounded by friends and gentlemen, and incapable of even suspecting that men of such seeming good sense, and so genteel an appearance, should deviate from the laws of honour, walks into the snare, nor is he undeceived till schooled by the severity of experience.

"As I suppose no man would be a gamester unless he hoped to win, so I fancy it would be

easy to reclaim him, if he was once effectually convinced that by continuing to play he must certainly lose. Permit me, my lord, to attempt this task, and to show that no young gentleman, by a year's run of play, and in a mixed company, can possibly be a gainer.

"Let me suppose, in the first place, that the chances on both sides are equal, that there are no marked cards, no pinching, shuffling, nor hiding; let me suppose that the players also have no advantage of each other in point of judgment, and still further let me grant, that the party is only formed at home, without going to the usual expensive places of resort frequented by gamesters. Even with all these circumstances in the young gamester's favour, it is evident he cannot be a gainer. With equal players, after a year's continuance of any particular game, it will be found that, whatever has been played for, the winnings on either side are very inconsiderable, and most commonly nothing at all. Here then is a year's anxiety, pain, jarring, and suspense, and nothing gained; were the parties to sit down and professedly play for nothing, they would contemn the proposal; they would call it trifling away time, and one of the most insipid amusements in nature;

yet, in fact, how do equal players differ? It is allowed that little or nothing can be gained; but much is lost; our youth, our time, those moments that may be laid out in pleasure or improvement, are foolishly squandered away in tossing cards, fretting at ill-luck, or, even with a run of luck in our favour, fretting that our winnings are so small.

"I have now stated gaming in that point of view in which it is alone defensible, as a commerce carried on with equal advantage and loss to either party, and it appears that the loss is great, and the advantage but small. But let me suppose the players not to be equal, but the superiority of judgment in our own favour. A person who plays under this conviction, however, must give up all pretensions to the approbation of his own mind, and is guilty of as much injustice as the thief who robbed a blind man because he knew he could not swear to his person.

"But, in fact, when I allowed the superiority of skill on the young beginner's side, I only granted an impossibility. Skill in gaming, like skill in making a watch, can only be acquired by long and painful industry. The most sagacious youth alive was never taught at once all the arts and all the niceties of gaming. Every passion must be

schooled by long habit into caution and phlegm; the very countenance must be taught proper discipline; and he who would practise this art with success, must practise on his own constitution all the severities of a martyr, without any expectation of the reward. It is evident, therefore, every beginner must be a dupe, and can only be expected to learn his trade by losses, disappointments, and dishonour.

"If a young gentleman, therefore, begins to game, the commencements are sure to be to his disadvantage; and all that he can promise himself is, that the company he keeps, though superior in skill, are above taking advantage of his ignorance, and unacquainted with any sinister arts to correct fortune. But this, however, is but a poor hope at best, and, what is worse, most frequently a false one. In general, I might almost have said always, those who live by gaming are not beholden to chance alone for their support, but take every advantage which they can practise without danger of detection. I know many are apt to say, and I have once said so myself, that after I have shuffled the cards, it is not in the power of a sharper to pack them; but at present I can confidently assure your lordship that such reasoners are deceived. I

have seen men both in Paris, The Hague, and London, who, after three deals, could give whatever hands they pleased to all the company. However, the usual way with sharpers is to correct fortune thus but once in a night, and to play in other respects without blunder or mistake, and a perseverance in this practice always balances the year in their favour.

"It is impossible to enumerate all the tricks and arts practised upon cards; few but have seen those bungling poor fellows, who go about at coffee-houses, perform their clumsy feats, and yet, indifferently as they are versed in the trade, they often deceive us; when such as these are possessed of so much art, what must not those be, who have been bred up to gaming from their infancy, whose hands are not like those mentioned above rendered callous by labour, who have continual practice in the trade of deceiving, and where the eye of the spectator is less upon its guard.

"Let the young beginner only reflect by what a variety of methods it is possible to cheat him, and perhaps it will check his confidence. His antagonists may act by signs and confederacy, and this he can never detect; they may cut to a particular card after three or four hands have

gone about, either by having that card pinched, or broader than the rest, or by having an exceeding fine wire thrust between the folds of the paper, and just peeping out at the edge. Or the cards may be chalked with particular marks, which none but the sharper can understand, or a new pack may be slipped in at a proper opportunity. I have known myself, in Paris, a fellow thus detected with a tin case, containing two packs of cards, concealed within his shirt sleeve, and which, by means of a spring, threw the cards ready packed into his hands. These and a hundred other arts may be practised with impunity and escape detection.

"The great error lies in imagining every fellow with a laced coat to be a gentleman. The address and transient behaviour of a man of breeding are easily acquired, and none are better qualified than gamesters in this respect. At first their complaisance, civility, and apparent honour is pleasing, but, upon examination, few of them will be found to have their minds sufficiently stored with any of the more refined accomplishments which truly characterise the man of breeding. This will commonly serve as a criterion to distinguish them, though there are other marks which every young

gentleman of fortune should be apprised of. A sharper, when he plays, generally handles and deals the cards awkwardly, like a bungler; he advances his bets by degrees, and keeps his antagonist in spirits by small advantages and alternate success at the beginning; to show all his force at once would but fright the bird he intends to decoy; he talks of honour and virtue, and his being a gentleman, and that he knows great men, and mentions his coal mines, and his estate in the country; he is totally divested of that masculine confidence which is the attendant of real fortune; he turns, yields, assents, smiles, as he hopes will be most pleasing to his destined prey; he is afraid of meeting a shabby acquaintance, particularly if in better company; as he grows richer he wears finer clothes; and if ever he is seen in an undress, it is most probable he is without money; so that seeing a gamester growing finer each day is a certain symptom of his success.

"The young gentleman who plays with such men for considerable sums is sure to be undone, and yet we seldom see even the rook himself make a fortune. A life of gaming must necessarily be a life of extravagance; parties of this kind are formed in houses where the whole profits

are consumed, and while those who play mutually ruin each other, they only who keep the house or the table acquire fortunes. Thus, gaming may readily ruin a fortune, but has seldom been found to retrieve it. The wealth which has been acquired with industry and hazard, and preserved for ages by prudence and foresight, is swept away on a sudden; and when a besieging sharper sits down before an estate, the property is often transferred in less time than the writings can be drawn to secure the possession. The neglect of business, and the extravagance of a mind which has been taught to covet precarious possession, brings on premature destruction; though poverty may fetch a compass and go somewhat about, yet will it reach the gamester at last; and, though his ruin be slow, yet it is certain.

"A thousand instances could be given of the fatal tendency of this passion, which first impoverishes the mind, and then perverts the understanding. Permit me to mention one, not caught from report, or dressed up by fancy, but such as has actually fallen under my own observation, and of the truth of which I beg your lordship may rest satisfied.

"At Tunbridge, in the year 1715, Mr. J.

Hedges made a very brilliant appearance. He had been married about two years to a young lady of great beauty and large fortune; they had one child, a boy, on whom they bestowed all that affection which they could spare from each other. He knew nothing of gaming, nor seemed to have the least passion for play; but he was unacquainted with his own heart; he began by degrees to bet at the tables for trifling sums, and his soul took fire at the prospect of immediate gain: he was soon surrounded with sharpers, who with calmness lay in ambush for his fortune, and coolly took advantage of the precipitancy of his passions.

"His lady perceived the ruin of her family approaching, but at first without being able to form any scheme to prevent it. She advised with his brother, who at that time was possessed of a small fellowship in Cambridge. It was easily seen that whatever passion took the lead in her husband's mind seemed to be there fixed unalterably; it was determined, therefore, to let him pursue fortune, but previously take measures to prevent the pursuits being fatal.

"Accordingly, every night, this gentleman was a constant attender at the hazard tables; he under-

stood neither the arts of sharpers nor even the allowed strokes of a connoisseur, yet still he played. The consequence is obvious; he lost his estate, his equipage, his wife's jewels, and every other movable that could be parted with, except a repeating watch. His agony upon this occasion was inexpressible; he was even mean enough to ask a gentleman, who sat near, to lend him a few pieces, in order to turn his fortune; but this prudent gamester, who plainly saw there was no expectation of being repaid, refused to lend a farthing, alleging a former resolution against lending. Hedges was at last furious with the continuance of ill success, and, pulling out his watch, asked if any person in company would set him sixty guineas upon it; the company were silent; he then demanded fifty; still no answer; he sunk to forty, thirty, twenty; finding the company still without answering, he cried out, 'By G—d, it shall never go for less,' and dashed it against the floor, at the same time attempting to dash out his brains against the marble chimneypiece.

"This last act of desperation immediately excited the attention of the whole company; they instantly gathered around, and prevented the effects of his passion; and, after he again became

cool, he was permitted to return home, with sullen discontent, to his wife. Upon his entering her apartment, she received him with her usual tenderness and satisfaction; while he answered her caresses with contempt and severity, his disposition being quite altered with his misfortunes. 'But, my dear Jemmy,' says his wife, 'perhaps you don't know the news I have to tell; my mamma's old uncle is dead; the messenger is now in the house, and you know his estate is settled upon you.' This account seemed only to increase his agony, and looking angrily at her, he cried, 'There you lie, my dear, his estate is not settled upon me.' 'I beg your pardon,' says she, 'I really thought it was; at least you have always told me so.' 'No,' returned he, 'as sure as you and I are to be miserable here, and our children beggars hereafter, I have sold the reversion of it this day, and have lost every farthing I got for it at the hazard-table.' 'What, all!' replied the lady. 'Yes, every farthing,' returned he, 'and I owe a thousand pounds more than I have to pay.' Thus speaking, he took a few frantic steps across the room. When the lady had a little enjoyed his perplexity, 'No, my dear,' cried she, 'you have lost but a trifle, and you owe noth-

ing. Our brother and I have taken care to prevent the effects of your rashness, and are actually the persons who have won your fortune. We employed proper persons for this purpose, who brought their winnings to me; your money, your equipage, are in my possession, and here I return them to you, from whom they were unjustly taken; I only ask permission to keep my jewels, and to keep you, my greatest jewel, from such dangers for the future.' Her prudence had the proper effect; he ever after retained a sense of his former follies, and never played for the smallest sums, even for amusement.

"Not less than three persons in one day fell a sacrifice at Bath to this destructive passion. Two gentlemen fought a duel, in which one was killed, and the other desperately wounded; and a youth of great expectation and excellent disposition at the same time ended his own life by a pistol. If there be any state that deserves pity, it must be that of a gamester; but the state of a dying gamester is of all situations the most deplorable.

"There is another argument which your lordship, I fancy, will not entirely despise: beauty, my lord, I own is at best but a trifle, but such as it is, I fancy few would willingly part with what little they have.

A man with a healthful complexion, how great a philosopher soever he be, would not willingly exchange it for a sallow, hectic phiz, pale eyes, and a sharp wrinkled visage. I entreat you only to examine the faces of all the noted gamblers around one of our public tables; have you ever seen anything more haggard, pinched, and miserable? And it is but natural that it should be so. The succession of passions flush the cheek with red, and all such flushings are ever succeeded by consequent paleness; so that a gamester contracts the sickly hue of a student, while he is only acquiring the stupidity of a fool.

"Your good sense, my lord, I have often had an occasion of knowing, yet how miserable it is to be in a set of company where the most sensible is ever the least skilful: your footman, with a little instruction, would, I dare venture to affirm, make a better and more successful gamester than you; want of passions and low cunning are the two great arts; and it is peculiar to this science alone that they who have the greatest passion for it are of all others the most unfit to practise it.

"Of all the men I ever knew, Spedding was the greatest blockhead, and yet the best gamester; he saw almost intuitively the advantage on either side,

and ever took it; he could calculate the odds in a moment, and decide upon the merits of a cock or a horse better than any man in England; in short, he was such an adept in gaming that he brought it up to a pitch of sublimity it had never attained before; yet, with all this, Spedding could not write his own name. What he died worth I cannot tell, but of this I am certain, he might have possessed a ministerial estate, and that won from men famed for their sense, literature, and patriotism.

"If, after this description, your lordship is yet resolved to hazard your fortune at gaming, I beg you would advert to the situation of an old and luckless gamester. Perhaps there is not in nature a more deplorable being; his character is too well marked, he is too well known to be trusted. A man that has been often a bankrupt, and renewed trade upon low compositions, may as well expect extensive credit as such a man. His reputation is blasted, his constitution worn, by the extravagance and ill hours of his profession; he is now incapable of alluring his dupes, and, like a superannuated savage of the forest, he is starved for want of vigour to hunt after prey.

"Thus gaming is the source of poverty, and, still worse, the parent of infamy and vice. It is

an inlet to debauchery; for the money thus acquired is but little valued. Every gamester is a rake, and his morals worse than his mystery. It is his interest to be exemplary in every scene of debauchery, his prey is to be courted with every guilty pleasure; but these are to be changed, repeated, and embellished, in order to employ his imagination while his reason is kept asleep; a young mind is apt to shrink at the prospect of ruin; care must be taken to harden his courage, and make him keep his rank; he must be either found a libertine, or he must be made one. And when a man has parted with his money like a fool, he generally sends his conscience after it like a villain, and the nearer he is to the brink of destruction, the fonder does he grow of ruin.

"Your friend and mine, my lord, had been thus driven to the last reserve: he found it impossible to disentangle his affairs and look the world in the face; impatience at length threw him into the abyss he feared, and life became a burden, because he feared to die. But I own that play is not always attended with such tragical circumstances, — some have had courage to survive their losses, and go on, content with beggary; and sure those misfortunes which are of our own production are of all

others most pungent. To see such a poor disbanded being an unwelcome guest at every table, and often flapped off like a fly, is affecting; in this case the closest alliance is forgotten, and contempt is too strong for the ties of blood to unbind.

"But, however fatal this passion may be in its consequence, none allures so much in the beginning; the person once listed as a gamester, if not soon reclaimed, pursues it through his whole life; no loss can retard, no danger awaken him to common sense; nothing can terminate his career but want of money to play, or of honour to be trusted.

"Among the number of my acquaintance, I knew but of two who succeeded by gaming, — the one a phlegmatic heavy man, who would have made a fortune in whatever way of life he happened to be placed; the other who had lost a fine estate in his youth by play, and retrieved a greater at the age of sixty-five, when he might be justly said to be past the power of enjoying it. One or two successful gamesters are thus set up in an age to allure the young beginner; we all regard such as the highest prize in a lottery, unmindful of the numerous losses that go to the accumulation of such infrequent success.

"Yet I would not be so morose as to refuse

your youth all kinds of play. The innocent amusements of a family must often be indulged, and cards allowed to supply the intervals of more real pleasure; but the sum played for in such cases should always be a trifle, — something to call up attention, but not engage the passions. The usual excuse for laying large sums is to make the players attend to their game; but, in fact, he that plays only for shillings will mind his cards equally well with him that bets guineas; for the mind habituated to stake large sums will consider them as trifles at last; and if one shilling could not exclude indifference at first, neither will a hundred in the end.

"I have often asked myself how it is possible that he who is possessed of competence can ever be induced to make it precarious by beginning play with the odds against him; for wherever he goes to sport his money, he will find himself overmatched and cheated. Either at White's [1] New-

[1] The existing "White's" club (established 1730) as well as the existing "Brooks's" (established 1764) were originally gambling clubs. Mr. Cunningham gives the following extract from the original rules of "Brooks's:" "Rule 40. That every person playing at the new quinze table do keep fifty guineas before him. 41. That every person playing at the twenty guinea table do not keep less than twenty guineas before him." — ED.

market, the Tennis Court, the Cock Pit, or the Billiard Table, he will find numbers who have no other resource but their acquisitions there; and if such men live like gentlemen, he may readily conclude it must be on the spoils of his fortune, or the fortunes of ill-judging men like himself. Was he to attend but a moment to their manner of betting at those places, he would readily find the gamester seldom proposing bets but with the advantage in his own favour. A man of honour continues to lay on the side on which he first won; but gamesters shift, change, lie upon the lurch, and take every advantage, either of our ignorance or neglect.

"In short, my lord, if a man designs to lay out his fortune in quest of pleasure, the gaming-table is, of all other places, that where he can have least for his money. The company are superficial, extravagant, and unentertaining; the conversation flat, debauched, and absurd; the hours unnatural and fatiguing; the anxiety of losing is greater than the pleasure of winning; friendship must be banished from that society, the members of which are intent only on ruining each other; every other improvement, either in knowledge or virtue, can scarce find room in that breast which is possessed by the spirit of play; the spirits become vapid, the

constitution is enfeebled, the complexion grows pale, till, in the end, the mind, body, friends, fortune, and even the hopes of futurity sink together! Happy, if nature terminates the scene, and neither justice nor suicide are called in to accelerate her tardy approach. I am, my lord, etc."

Among other papers in the custody of Mr. Nash, was the following angry letter addressed to him in this manner:

"*To Richard Nash, Esq., King of Bath.*

"SIRE: — I must desire your Majesty to order the enclosed to be read to the great Mr. Hoyle,[1] if he be found in any part of your dominions. You will perceive that it is a panegyric on his manifold virtues, and that he is thanked more particularly for spending his time so much to the emolument of the public, and for obliging the world with a book more read than the Bible, and which so eminently tends to promote Christian knowledge, sound morality, and the happiness of mankind."

(The enclosed we have omitted, as it contains a satire on gaming, and may probably give offence to our betters.)

[1] Hoyle of the "Games" book. — ED.

"This author, however" (continues the letter writer), "has not set forth half the merits of the piece under consideration, nor is the great care which he has taken to prevent our reading any other book, instead of this, been sufficiently taken notice of; beware of counterfeits; these books are not to be depended on unless signed by E. Hoyle, is a charitable admonition. As you have so much power at Bath, and are absolute, I think you should imitate other great monarchs, by rewarding those with honours who have been serviceable in your state; and I beg that a new order may be established for that purpose. Let him who has done nothing but game all his life, and has reduced the most families to ruin and beggary, be made a Marshal of the Black Ace; and those who are every day making proselytes to the tables, have the honour of knighthood conferred on them, and be distinguished by the style and title of Knights of the Four Knaves.

"The moment I came into Bath, my ears were saluted with the news of a gentleman's being plundered at the gaming-table, and having lost his senses on the occasion. The same day a duel was fought between two gentlemen gamesters on the Downs, and in the evening another hanged

himself at the Bear, but first wrote a note which was found near him, importing that he had injured the best of friends. These are the achievements of your Knights of the Four Knaves. The devil will pick the bones of all gamesters, that's certain. . . . Ay, and of duellers too; but, in the meantime, let none think that duelling is a mark of courage; for I know it is not. A person served under me in Flanders, who had fought four duels, and depended so much on his skill, the strength of his arm, and the length of his sword, that he would take up a quarrel for anybody; yet in the field I never saw one behave so like a poltroon. If a few of these gamesters and duellers were gibbeted, it might perhaps help to amend the rest. I have often thought that the only way, or at least the most effectual way, to prevent duelling would be to hang both parties — the living and the dead — on the same tree,[1] and if the winner and the loser were

[1] A scheme to prevent duelling, similar to this, was attempted by Gustavus Adolphus; and is thus recorded by the writer of his life: "In one of the Prussian campaigns, when the irrational practice of duelling rose to a considerable height in the Swedish army, not only amongst persons of rank and fashion, but even amongst common soldiers, this prince published a severe edict, and denounced death against every delinquent. Soon after a quarrel arose between two officers of very high command, and as they knew the king's firmness in preserving his word inviolable,

treated in the same manner, it would be better for the public, since the tucking up of a few R——ls might be a warning to others, and save many a worthy family from destruction. I am yours, etc."

The author of this letter appears to have been very angry, and not without reason; for, if I am rightly informed, his only son was ruined at Bath,

they agreed to request an audience, and besought his permission to decide the affair like men of honour. His Majesty took fire in a moment, but repressed his passion with such art that they mistook him; of course with some reluctance, but under the appearance of pitying brave men, who thought their reputation injured, he told them that he blamed them much for their mistaken notions concerning fame and glory; yet as this unreasonable determination appeared to be the result of deliberate reflection, to the best of their deluded capacity, he would allow them to decide the affair at the time and place specified. 'And, gentlemen,' said he, 'I will be an eye-witness myself of your extraordinary valour and prowess.' At the hour appointed, Gustavus arrived, accompanied by a small body of infantry, whom he formed into a circle around the combatants. 'Now,' says he, 'fight till one man dies;' and calling the executioner of the army to him (or the provost marshal, as the language then ran), 'Friend,' added he, 'the instant one is killed behead the other before my eyes.' Astonished with such inflexible firmness, the two generals, after pausing a moment, fell down on their knees, and asked the king's forgiveness, who made them embrace each other, and give their promise to continue faithful friends to their last moments, as they did with sincerity and thankfulness." — *Goldsmith.*

and by sharpers. But why is Mr. Nash to be blamed for this? It must be acknowledged that he always took pains to prevent the ruin of the youth of both sexes, and had so guarded against duelling, that he would not permit a sword to be worn in Bath.

As the heart of a man is better known by his private than public actions, let us take a view of Nash in domestic life, — among his servants and dependents, where no gloss was required to colour his sentiments and disposition, nor any mask necessary to conceal his foibles. Here we shall find him the same open-hearted, generous, good-natured man we have already described; one who was ever fond of promoting the interests of his friends, his servants, and dependents, and making them happy. In his own house no man perhaps was more regular, cheerful, and beneficent than Mr. Nash. His table was always free to those who sought his friendship, or wanted a dinner; and after grace was said, he usually accosted the company in the following extraordinary manner, to take off all restraint and ceremony. "Come, gentlemen, eat and welcome; spare, and the devil choke you." I mention this circumstance for no other reason but because it is well known, and is

consistent with the singularity of his character and behaviour.

As Mr. Nash's thoughts were entirely employed in the affairs of his government, he was seldom at home but at the time of eating or of rest. His table was well served, but his entertainment consisted principally of plain dishes. Boiled chicken and roast mutton were his favourite meats, and he was so fond of the small sort of potatoes, that he called them English pineapples, and generally ate them as others do fruit, after dinner. In drinking he was altogether as regular and abstemious. Both in this and in eating, he seemed to consult nature, and obey only her dictates. Good small beer, with or without a glass of wine in it, and sometimes wine and water, was his drink at meals, and after dinner he generally drank one glass of wine. He seemed fond of hot suppers, usually supped about nine or ten o'clock, upon roast breast of mutton and his potatoes, and soon after supper went to bed; which induced Doctor Cheyne to tell him jestingly, that he behaved like other brutes, and lay down as soon as he had filled his belly. "Very true," replied Nash, "and this prescription I had from my neighbour's cow, who is a better physician than you, and a superior

judge of plants, notwithstanding you have written so learnedly on the vegetable diet." [1]

Nash generally arose early in the morning, being seldom in bed after five; and to avoid disturbing the family and depriving his servants of their rest, he had the fire laid after he was in bed, and in the morning lighted it himself, and sat down to read some of his few but well-chosen books. After reading some time, he usually went to the pump-room and drank the waters; then took a walk on the parade, and went to the coffee-house to breakfast; after which, till two o'clock (his usual time of dinner), his hours were spent in arbitrating differences amongst his neighbours, or the company resorting to the wells; directing the diversions of the day, visiting the newcomers, or

[1] Nash's jests have been mentioned in preceding pages (pp. 125, 133, etc.). A collection of "The Jests of Beau Nash" was published a year later than the date of this "Life," by W. Bristow of St. Paul's Churchyard (who often published for John Newbery; but this collection Sir James Prior thought was edited by Griffith Jones, said to have been editor of the *Public Ledger*. Nevertheless, it is possible that the later publication consisted to some extent of unused portions of the collection made by Goldsmith for the "Life." The allusions in the text may therefore be to the matter afterward published in the volume of "Jests;" though no doubt many of Nash's jests were in print before both the "Life" and Bristow's supplemental volume. — Ed.

receiving friends at his own house, of which there was a great concourse till within six or eight years before his death.

His generosity and charity in private life, though not so conspicuous, was as great as that in public, and indeed far more considerable than his little income would admit of. He could not stifle the natural impulse which he had to do good, but frequently borrowed money to relieve the distressed; and when he knew not conveniently where to borrow, he has been often observed to shed tears, as he passed through the wretched supplicants who attended his gate.

This sensibility, this power of feeling the misfortunes of the miserable, and his address and earnestness in relieving their wants, exalts the character of Mr. Nash, and draws an impenetrable veil over his foibles. His singularities are forgotten when we behold his virtues, and he who laughed at the whimsical character and behaviour of this Monarch of Bath, now laments that he is no more.[1]

[1] Mr. Croker says that Samuel Derrick succeeded Nash as master of the ceremonies at Bath. See "Standard Library edit. of Boswell," 1884, vol. i. p. 86. But according to Mr. Peach's edition of Tunstall's "Round About Bath," 1876, p. 469, "Mr. Collett was the immediate successor of Nash in 1761." This latter authority has it that Derrick succeeded Collett. — Ed.

NOTES

THE EPITAPHS ON NASH, AND THE DATE OF HIS DEATH. — It should be mentioned that the epitaph which our author gives at pp. 156–60, as by Doctor Oliver, appeared anonymously in the quarto pamphlet published by Keene of Bath (*vide* note, p. 156.) The same epitaph appeared in the *Public Ledger* of March 12, 1761 (in the series called "The Visitor"), without any mention of Doctor Oliver's name. Here, however, it had the following introductory note: "Bath, Feb. 13, 1761. Sir, by inserting the following 'Sketch of the Life, Character, and Manners of the late Mr. Nash,' drawn by the elegant pencil of a very able master, you will oblige the public in general, and in particular your humble servant, BATHIENSIS."

We note on the vexed question of the date of Nash's death that the *Public Ledger* of Tuesday, Feb. 17, 1761, has: "On Friday morning last, about 4 o'clock, died, at Bath, Richard Nash, Esq." The Friday here mentioned was Feb. 13th.

We have not found Doctor King's epitaph (given at pp. 161–63) with that writer's works; but the following in his posthumously published "Political and Literary Anecdotes of His Own Times," 1818, p. 248, shows sufficiently, no doubt, that he wrote this epitaph. "I promised Nash, a few years before he died, that if I survived him, I would write his epitaph. I performed my promise, and in my description of this extraordinary phenomenon, I think I have written nothing but the truth; one thing I omitted, which I did not reflect on until after the epitaph was printed, that a statue had been erected to him whilst he was

living; and this great honour had been conferred on him with more justice than to any other of his contemporaries or brother kings." — ED.

THE HIGHWAYMAN POULTER, *alias* BAXTER. — This personage may be the same as long-legged Timothy Baxter, the ruffian introduced by Goldsmith in Chapters XXX. and XXXI. of the "Vicar of Wakefield." The "Vicar" and the "Life of Nash" were written at about the same time, but which had priority is a question. — ED.

THE COMEDY OF BEAU NASH

PREFACE

In a "Life of Richard Nash, Esq.," by Goldsmith, may be found full authority for the eccentricities of the stage hero. In the same biography, the writer incidentally dwells upon the knavish subtleties and compunctious visitings of a Jack Baxter; who, though never honoured with the personal intimacy of the beau monarch, yet desired to acknowledge in fine bold type his wayward and royal benevolence. The only "historical" persons in the present drama are the lauded potentate and the laudatory pickpocket. Two or three stern thinkers, who have objected to the want of a "moral tendency" in the comedy, may say of the king and the sharper, *Arcades ambo!* All the author has to reply is, — he disputes not such classification.

As, however, the *fripeur* in "Gil Blas" vaunted the "moral tendency" of his mode of dealing, it may, possibly, be allowed to the play-writer to say something in defence of the intention of his labours. It may not, even in these days, be assuming too

much, to put the dramatist on a level with the dealer of second-hand goods; indeed, the parallel is but of too frequent occurrence.

The author submits, that the best purpose of comedy is effected when the results of a desperate and degrading vice are illustrated in a manner not to pain by its violence, or to offend by its grossness. It is for the reader to decide, from the "tendency" of the whole of the third act, between achievement and mere attempt.

The author pleads guilty to one charge made against his drama, — that it possesses "no startling situations;" and confesses that, doubtless, a comedy of manners would be a much better comedy, were it a melodrama.

"Startling situations" have been so frequent, that the public are now taught — by some, too, whose ostensible duty it is to teach the public better — to consider mere men and women mere commonplaces, and mere pictures of life mere every-day dulness. According to such instructors, audiences are to be treated not as a body of persons in sound moral health, but as a convocation of opium-eaters. A dramatist is now to be "a dreamer of dreams," and not an illustrator of truths.

The writer can truly affirm that much less labour of thought, much less vain research was exercised to give a dramatic existence to "Beau Nash," than sufficed to produce any two of his most successful dramas previously published.

In conclusion, the author is happy to acknowledge the zeal of the ladies and gentlemen engaged in his comedy. To Mr. W. Farren — charged with a long and most arduous part — the writer is especially indebted.

D. J.

Little Chelsea, July 19, 1834.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN.

Beau Nash	Mr. W. Farren.
Derby	Mr. F Vining.
Wilton	Mr. Shepherd.
Alderman Beetle	Mr. Strickland.
Claptrap	Mr. Buckstone.
Jack Baxter	Mr. Webster.
Lavender Tom	Mr. Brindall.
Dropper	Mr. Haynes.
Casket	Mr. Eaton.
Bathos	Mr. Mathews.
Mon. Pas	Mr. Bishop.
Skillet	Mr. Moore.
Twang	Mr. Smith.

WOMEN.

Belinda	Mrs. Nisbett.
Louisa	Miss Harrington.
Mrs. Coral	Mrs. W. Clifford.
Slipper	Mrs. Humby.

Scene — *Bath.*

This comedy was represented for the first time July 16, 1834.

BEAU NASH

THE KING OF BATH

ACT I.

SCENE I. — *A Street in Bath.*

Enter DERBY *and* WILTON.

WILT. Ah, Derby! if thou'dst let my rules, —

DERB. Rules! thou'dst trim feelings as Dutch gardeners clip evergreens.

WILT. Not so.

DERB. Thou wouldst. Am not I a free, vigorous sapling, and wouldst not shape me to a very verdant griffin?

WILT. To anything but a gamester.

DERB. I tell you, since we parted I have played but once — or twice — or — three or four times. But thou art one of those perplexing people who make a creed of casualties.

WILT. I arrived in Bath late last night. I sought you in vain at your lodgings. Were you not at the tables?

DERB. I was vexed, — disappointed of an interview with Belinda, and —

WILT. You tranquillised Cupid with a dice-box?

DERB. 'Sdeath, Wilton! dost think emotions are to be put by like an opera-glass? I was flushed, harassed, and I — I had one cut at hazard with Jack Baxter.

WILT. Of what fortune and family is Jack Baxter?

DERB. Faith! he may be, for what I know, of the elect of the gypsies.

WILT. A notable friend.

DERB. Friend! Can't I visit Bartlemy Fair, without pledging faith to the fire-eaters?

WILT. And now, Belinda —

DERB. Wouldst believe it, her uncle still forbids me her presence, until, as he says, I am quite reclaimed?

WILT. Is not the precaution reasonable?

DERB. Reasonable! Shall I turn anchorite? — live on wild sorrel, and make love in a hair shirt? Wouldst have me prepare for marriage as martyrs

make ready for the stake, — by long fasting and mortification?

WILT. Consider; Alderman Beetle is old, and —

DERB. That's it. When we have lost all relish of wine, 'tis marvellously easy to sneer at the butler. But this journey from London, — is't entirely friendship for me?

WILT. Frankly, no. I make but a bird's stay at Bath, flying direct to — to Swansea.

DERB. To Swansea! My folly against your wisdom, you fly to a petticoat? Never deny it: I warrant me, your portmanteau contains evidence direct.

WILT. Evidence?

DERB. Ribands for your lady's locks — or a silver collar and bells for her pet kid. Who is this daughter of St. David?

WILT. The daughter of a poor curate. In my tour last year, I saw and — as I have since felt assured — loved her. Now I am determined, — but come; we can stroll and talk. (*Going.*)

Enter CLAPTRAP.

CLAPT. (*To* DERBY) Sir, — sir! A syllable with you.

DERB. Only one, and quick.

CLAPT. Surely, sir, you are the gentleman who last night and this morning walked before Alderman Beetle's? —

DERB. Why, — yes.

CLAPT. With your eyes nailed to the first-floor windows, — curtains white, with pink valance? —

DERB. Yes. —

CLAPT. One minute trying to whistle, — the next, sharpening your teeth on your left thumb-nail? —

DERB. Well?

CLAPT. Now striking into a passionate step — and now letting either leg subside into a melancholy saunter? —

DERB. Granting 'twere I, what then?

CLAPT. Then, sir, — this letter.

DERB. From Belinda. And now, my friend, why did you so curiously watch me?

CLAPT. A matter of business, sir.

DERB. Business! Why, who and what are you?

CLAPT. By name, Thespis Claptrap, formerly actor at the playhouse here in Bath; but now, chief assistant to the illustrious Mr. Powel.

DERB. Not the Powel who has set Bath mad after his puppets?

CLAPT. Sir, the professor of motions; and with myself, as Mr. Bickerstaff's Tatler will certify, worker of Punch.

WILT. Well, though I have heard much of the puppets, I never heard of you.

CLAPT. To be sure not, sir; the wood and paint carry it; who thinks of the poor devils who find the words and pull the wires?

WILT. Yet why leave the wisdom of the theatre for the jargon of the puppet-show?

CLAPT. Sir, I did but follow the example of my betters. They vowed the playhouse was the vulgar produce of barbarous times; and so patronised Punch to display their refinement.

DERB. But why so closely observe me?

CLAPT. We're getting up "Rinaldo and Armidia;" I'm at a short notice to talk and pull for the disconsolate lover.

DERB. Well?

CLAPT. I intend to build myself upon you.

DERB. Upon my soul, I feel the delicacy of the preference.

CLAPT. You ought; 'twill make you a grand Turk with the women.

WILT. Then, you are the established lover of the puppets?

CLAPT. My general line is the kings and queens: Mr. Powel does the quadrupeds and common people. Talking of kings, I have to wait on Squire Nash, the king of Bath. 'Tis past his levee time.

DERB. What takes you to Nash? Has he dealings with Punch?

CLAPT. Sir, he has written us a new play.

WILT. Why, what's its purpose?

CLAPT. To brighten the dull, and make neat the slatternly. In short, sir, a cruel blow at the slovens of Bath. 'Tis thought dirty boots, morning caps, and white aprons — in all which matters certain visitors greatly sin — will never hold up their heads after it. Moreover, there's a sharp moral in the play.

DERB. The moral of Punch! Ha! ha!

CLAPT. And who more fit to preach a moral, — seeing that Punch has in his day filled the very highest offices; though now, indeed, he has taken to the streets and, like a tyrant in misfortune, sells his wisdom for bread and garlic? [*Exit.*

WILT. Is King Nash really the magnifico that rumour trumpets him?

DERB. He is in Bath the despot of the mode: the Nero of the realm of skirts; the Tiberius of a silk stocking.

WILT. And what may be his kingship's origin and history?

DERB. 'Tis said, his father was a blower of glass; and they who best know Nash see in the son confirmation of the legend. 'Tis certain, our monarch started in life in a red coat; changed it for a templar's suit of black; played and elbowed his way up the back stairs of fashion; came to our city — championed the virtue of the wells against the malice of a physician; drove the doctor from his post; founded the pump-room and assembly-house; mounted the throne of etiquette; put on her crown of peacock-plumes; and here he sits, Richard Nash, by the grace of impudence, King of Bath!

WILT. And — for I have letters to deliver, — what is the creature's character?

DERB. 'Tis made up of equal patches of black and white; a moral chess-board, the moves once known, readily played upon. By the way, to-morrow his statue will, for the first time, be exhibited. Come.

WILT. A statue of Nash!

DERB. Ay, erected in the pump-room by the mayor and aldermen; who, with corporation taste, place the figure between the busts of Newton and Pope.

WILT. Impossible! The corporation cannot so offend philosophy and wit.

DERB. Why, in this case, the corporation reverse the common rule, and use no ceremony with strangers. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

NASH'S *Apartments, showily furnished.* NASH *discovered holding his morning levee.* BATHOS, TWANG, SKILLET, MONSIEUR PAS, TRADESMEN, *etc., in attendance.* CASKET *waiting.*

NASH. (*Reading paper*) "To Richard Nash, Esq., on his sickness at Tunbridge." Foregad, Mr. Bathos! I have been drenched with verse.

BATH. If your honour would mark the nerve in the last line, —

NASH. I see. (*Reads.*)

> "Come then, kind health, — O, quickly come away;
> Bid Nash revive, and all the world be gay."

"All the world be gay." Ha! there's spice in that.

BATH. I knew your honour would like the last line.

NASH. I always prefer your last line. "Sickness at Tunbridge?" Bathos, isn't the subject

somewhat flat? I have been well these three months.

BATH. That's unlucky — for my verse. Perhaps, on a future illness, —

NASH. Bathos (*aside to him*), you have heard of the statue to-morrow? Now, if a handful of verses on the subject were found, —

BATH. They shall be done. I'll delight your honour with —

NASH. Me! I desire you don't imagine I care for praise: 'tis merely to please the people. For myself, I hope I am above these things: too high to snuff vulgar incense. (*To* SKILLET.) What are you? —

SKILL. My lord, my new book of cookery, dedicated to your worship; I —

NASH. (*To* TWANG) And you?

TWANG. My last new air, your worship's honour; the "Bath Waters." If —

NASH. (*To* PAS) And you?

PAS. *Milord, le menuet, le menuet que* —

NASH. The cookery book will do; 'tis promoted to my kitchen. (*To* CASK.) See that the "Bath Waters" be played on my own French horns. For the minuet, (*to* PAS) run not stark mad with pride, if I dance the minuet myself. No

words. Casket, clear the rooms. (CASKET *shows them out.*) Yes; 'twill be a glorious day; a triumphant day.

Re-enter CASKET, *showing in* ALDERMAN BEETLE.

CASK. Alderman Beetle. [*Exit.*

BEET. I could hardly fight my way to the door. Such a crowd of rascals!

NASH. Ha, alderman! I had better been born to a pickaxe than a fine taste.

BEET. It must be dreadful. Well, Belinda has promised to come and see your house; has promised her judgment on your new arrangements: and, by my honour, they're magnificent. But, to the great point. Wilt make Belinda a happy woman?

NASH. I can't.

BEET. What prevents it?

NASH. Our parish registers. I'm sixty-five; she's not one and twenty.

BEET. Tut! you may live these thirty years.

NASH. All the worse for the lady.

BEET. Wilt see her sacrificed to that spendthrift, Derby?

NASH. Now don't appeal to my compassion.

BEET. An abandoned —

NASH. If you proceed, she's lost. I must marry her.

BEET. Let's strike hands; 'tis a match, then.

Enter CASKET.

CASK. Mr. Powel's man. He comes for, I think he says, a — a play; he insists 'tis your honour's play.

BATH. Hast written a play? Satirical, I warrant?

NASH. (*To* CASK.) That packet. (CASK. *brings papers to* NASH.) Confusion take me, alderman, but I think there's here will make 'em wince.

BEET. Mind; you must cure as well as cut.

NASH. Never fear. The play is like the leaf that Doctor Cheney talks of, — one side a blister, the other a salve. Blockhead! What have you brought me? These are the duchess's letters: put them next the countess's; with the packet from Mr. Pope. (CASK. *brings MS.*) So: here's the play. There's not a little, I think, in the name?

BEET. (*Reading*) "Punch in Boots; or, the Prince of Morocco and the Lady of the White

Apron." A hit, indeed, at the boors and sluts. But Mr. Powel's man? Is the play to be played by the puppets? Why not give it to the actors?

NASH. Oh, poor rogues! Punch is far more popular. (*Giving MS. to* CASK.) Tell him to study the parts, and to let me see the new speaker who is to play the lover. (*Exit* CASKET.) Yes; 'twill work a marvellous reformation.

BEET. No doubt. But, my dear friend, it is a match? That reprobate Derby —

NASH. May be reclaimed. No, ruin seize me! I wouldn't break the young dog's heart, — I —

Enter CASKET.

Well?

CASK. Mr. Baxter.

BEET. Baxter! No, it can't be a fellow called Jack Baxter — a sharper of Tunbridge, of whom I have heard tricks that —

NASH. Alderman Beetle, Mr. Baxter — (*aside*) the devil take him! — is a gentleman who, — in fact, Mr. Baxter is not Jack Baxter from Tunbridge. His family is —

BEET. Not the Baxters of Staffordshire?

NASH. The — the — same.

BEET. His uncle, Lord Fog, and myself were close as brothers. (*To* CASKET.) Pray show him up. [*Exit* CASKET.

NASH. (*Aside*) Shall I trust the alderman with my secret? Shall — no, 'twould spoil all. Here comes Jack. His impudence amounts to genius.

Enter JACK BAXTER.

BAXT. Your servant, Squire Nash: your very particular servant.

BEET. (*Aside to* NASH) Egad! there's a great family likeness. Do introduce me.

NASH. Mr. Baxter, — Alderman Beetle, a magistrate. You *ought* to be better acquainted.

BAXT. A magistrate?

BEET. Ha, sir! I knew several of your family.

BAXT. Indeed, sir?

BEET. Yes, sir; yours is not a genealogy of yesterday. Yours is an ancient tree.

NASH. (*Aside*) As ancient, to-day, as the gallows.

BEET. You are no mushrooms. You are not of a family who come up one hour, and are cut down the next.

NASH. (*Aside*) Yet hath that very accident occurred to several of its members.

BEET. I knew your uncle well, sir; intimate with him up to the hour of his elevation.

BAXT. (*Aside*) Sheriff, that year, I suppose?

BEET. But when he went to the upper house, —

NASH. Then, of course, there was an end to the acquaintance.

BEET. (*To* NASH) You must recollect some of his speeches?

NASH. I recollect his last perfectly.

BAXT. (*Aside*) I don't half like this. Well, alderman, for the misfortune of my uncle, —

BEET. Misfortune! I hope to see his nephew meet with the same reward.

NASH. And from my knowledge of his merits, I may venture to promise that enjoyment. (*Aside to* BAXT.) He thinks you respectable. Humour the joke.

BAXT. Alderman, I seize your friendship. Pretty place, this Bath.

BEET. Ah, Mr. Baxter! we owe much to our friend here. To-morrow we pay a small part of the debt. To-morrow we exhibit the statue.

NASH. Don't name it; these honours are plaguey heavy matters. I pray Atlas, I mayn't sink under 'em. Look here, now. (*Displaying brilliant snuff-box.*)

BEET. Splendid, indeed!

NASH. The thirteenth sent me within this week. Foregad! I ought to be Briareus, with a hundred noses. Alderman, I must beg your mercy.

BEET. Certainly. Yet, Belinda; wilt see her?

NASH. I'll call, in my drive.

BEET. And, perhaps, she may be induced to view the house to-day. (*To* BAXTER.) Sir, I hope for your esteem.

BAXT. You shall have it, alderman. Jack Baxter never —

BEET. Jack Baxter! Is your name Jack Baxter?

NASH. Yes; John Baxter. It is — (*aside to* BEETLE) — ha! ha! an odd coincidence.

BEET. (*Aside to* NASH) The name startled me; but not a word. Mr. Baxter, I am charmed to renew my friendship with your ancient and honourable family. (*Aside to* NASH.) Remember — Belinda. [*Exit.*

NASH. Jack Baxter, for the last five minutes you have been thought a reputable person. Don't presume on the weakness of an alderman, — you are not.

BAXT. Reputable! Haven't I given up play on my own account to peach other rogues? — Left

my old friends, to be your spy at the tables? Besides, to prove my reformation, I do think I shall some day print my life. I've brought it to show your honour. (*Producing papers.*)

NASH. Your life!

BAXT. And with your worship's goodness, addressed to your honour, as a warning to all rogues.

NASH. (*Taking the MS.*) First let me consider whether I'm a sufficient patron for so numerous a body. (*Reads the MS.*) "The discoveries of John Poulter, *alias* Baxter" — "surprising tricks" — "frauds" — humph! "Written wholly by himself."

BAXT. No trick there, your honour; I'd despise it. You see, I am getting on, but virtue's a work of time, sir: you can't raise a character like a salad.

NASH. No; and especially after the first crop. Salad! Hempseed, knave. Go; I have now no time to hear your news of last night; call again. I may have another trial for your sprouting virtue, Jack Baxter. [*Exeunt severally.*

Scene III.

An Apartment in the House of Alderman Beetle.

Enter Slipper *and* Claptrap.

Slipp. Give me a lover like Mr. Derby; no cat can outwatch him. The alderman's carriage had hardly rolled from the door, than here, punctual to the letter, the dear man hurried with a mouthful of the sweetest oaths to my lady. Now, you, Mr. Claptrap, —

Clapt. I know my flaw — I never could swear sweetly in my life. And then the puppets have taught me to look on love as a foolish matter.

Slipp. Puppets! Why, puppets ar'n't flesh and blood.

Clapt. No; but when love's in the case, flesh and blood are puppets. Love! 'tis an old, worn-out story — nothing new can be said of it.

Slipp. But suppose Mr. Derby and my lady are now determined to marry?

Clapt. 'Tis a proof they have worn it out, too. When people have said all they can about love, they take marriage as a resource from idleness. (*Knocking without.*)

SLIPP. (*Looking out*) As I live, there's the alderman! So soon come back, — and with him a strange gentleman! What's to be done with Mr. Derby?

Enter BELINDA, *from inner room.*

BEL. Oh, Slipper! if you have no scheme to preserve us, we are lost. Poor Derby —

CLAPT. 'Tis a bright thought. He's saved: I promise the protection of "The Prince of Morocco." Here he is. (*Showing MS.*)

SLIPP. What can the man mean?

CLAPT. "The Prince of Morocco and the Lady of the White Apron." 'Tis our new play, writ by Squire Nash. Mark a few of the directions. (*Reads.*) "The Prince, having thrown his wife out of window, goeth tranquilly to bed in his boots."

SLIPP. Just like the sex.

BEL. But Mr. Derby, —

CLAPT. Whilst I read, let Slipper sneak him out. Hush, the alderman. (*Affecting repugnance to read.*) No, madam, no; it is impossible —

Enter BEETLE *and* BAXTER *at back.*

I dare not continue the play. Be satisfied; I can't proceed.

SLIPP. Only a little more. Now, go on: you left the prince in bed in his boots.

BEET. And there let the prince lie. What mumming is this?

CLAPT. Mumming, alderman? 'Tis a play — a legitimate play. I act the prince.

BEET. Varlet! I'll have your princeship whipped.

CLAPT. Whipped! Would you violate the unities?

BEET. Who are you — whence come you — what do you here?

CLAPT. I am second to Mr. Powel — I came from Squire Nash — I was reading a scene of his new play.

BEL. The fault is mine, uncle. I was curious to hear the production of so bright a pen. You know, I dearly love all plays.

CLAPT. Caution — never confess it: 'tis enough to ruin you with people of wit.

BEL. Indeed?

CLAPT. Surely. If you'd pass for somebody, you must sneer at a play, but idolise Punch. I know the most refined folks, who'd not budge a foot to hear Garrick, would give a guinea each, nay, mob for a whole morning, to see a Greenlander eat seal's-flesh and swallow whale oil. But

if you'll not betray me to Squire Nash, and the alderman will listen? —

BEET. Pshaw! Belinda, Mr. Baxter; the nephew of my old friend, Lord Fog. (*To him, aside.*) What dost think of my niece?

BAXT. Twice an angel, by my life! Madam, I am your most profound adorer.

BEL. Already, sir?

BAXT. Already, ma'am. There is a something in divine woman, ma'am, that — that is so great a something, because the tongue of man, ma'am, cannot clearly tell what that something is, ma'am. I say, — I feel it is that something, —

BEL. Sir, I understand you perfectly.

CLAPT. (*Aside to her*) 'Tis the shortest way, be sure of it.

BEET. (*Aside*) How like his uncle! 'Twas lucky I again met him; for if Nash still dally, egad, I'll secure her from Derby by marrying her to Mr. Baxter. Of course, you see the ceremony to-morrow, — that is, the statue of our master, Nash?

BAXT. My birds won't let me; can't neglect 'em, they fight to-morrow. Got a match with Lord Steelspur and Whitefeather: such a main of cocks. You (*to* BELINDA) never saw my birds?

BEL. Are they so brilliant?

BAXT. They'd make your eyes ache to look at 'em. Brilliant! they've combs like coral; bills like coals; legs like steel; feet, yellow as guinea-gold; and nails at the end of 'em, white, long, and sharp as your ladyship's.

BEL. Indeed.

BAXT. True; after this, I needn't tell you how they'll fight. And then, to hear 'em crow, — they crow like — (*French horns heard without.*)

BEET. Mischief take it! isn't that his honour?

CLAPT. (*Looking out*) Yes, Squire Nash; horns and all. His four grays have new harness — his postilions new liveries — his footmen —

BAXT. (*To* BEET) The squire may want some private talk — I'll take my leave. (*Aside.*) Wouldn't meet him for a rouleau.

BEET. (*Aside*) He mustn't see him, or he might suppose — Will you step into that room, Mr. Baxter?

BEL. Uncle! my room?

BEET. But an instant. Should his honour — you understand — see you, a suspicion might —

BEL. Suspicion, sir? — suspicion?

BEET. I insist. In that room, sir. Slipper — a word — come you with me. (*To* CLAPT.) Sirrah, stay you here. [*Exit* BEET., SLIPP. *following.*

BAXT. Ay, ma'am; we'll talk in this room.

CLAPT. (*Placing himself before door*) Certainly not; 'tis already occupied.

BAXT. By whom?

CLAPT. My assistant: he is now studying with the puppets a tyrant for our new play. I warn you to respect his indignation.

BAXT. Let me pass: I promise your tyrant all respect.

CLAPT. Nay, once passed, respect for the tyrant would be impossible.

BAXT. Why?

CLAPT. You'd see his wires.

BAXT. (*Aside*) I hear them coming. Stand away: I will see your man — I will see —

Enter DERBY *from room in scene.*

Mr. Derby!

DERBY. Jack Baxter!

BEL. I am so confused — you know Mr. Baxter? knew, probably, his uncle, the alderman's friend! — Lord — Lord —

BAXT. Lord Fog.

DERB. Really I was ignorant that Jack Baxter was nephew to a lord.

BAXT. Nor did I believe Mr. Derby under-journeyman to the master of the puppets.

DERB. For the present, let us hold our new characters. Jack, for one minute, take my place.

CLAPT. This way, sir: our mystery being saved, the profane may enter.

BAXT. (*Aside*) So! a match — clear as sixes.

[*Exit into room.*

DERB. Now, Belinda, at once quit this sorry game of hide-and-seek, and boldly take up marriage.

BEL. Marriage seems my destiny; for in me behold the future queen of Bath. Did ye not hear his majesty's arrival?

DERB. What! Nash? Ha! ha! By Vulcan, he brings most ominous music.

CLAPT. Hark! the alderman and his honour.

BEL. To your hiding-place, Derby.

DERB. First promise —

BEL. What should I promise?

DERB. That to-night — to-night —

BEL. To-night will come, but now I promise nothing. Hide, hide, and trust. (*Exit* DERBY *into room.*) Where's Slipper?

CLAPT. Carried off by the alderman. Only engage them, and I'll steal Derby out.

Enter BEETLE, NASH, *and* SLIPPER.

BEET. This is, indeed, kind; on the eve of such a day to visit us.

NASH. What are triumphs, alderman, (*to* BELINDA) unless shared with those we love?

BEL. A sentiment worthy a conqueror.

NASH. Foregad! Jupiter himself with all his thunderbolts, had been but a dull lump of dignity without a queen. I — I have felt this; feel it, now.

BEL. What, sir, do not even your honours —

NASH. Honour, madam, is like wine; not to be truly enjoyed alone. Could I prevail on a certain lip to taste, —

BEL. Lud! my head swims to think of it.

NASH. (*Aside*) To own the truth — so does mine. A cap of bliss — a draught of nectar, — a — (*seeing* CLAPTRAP) — what brought you here?

BEL. 'Twas obedience to my summons. I had tidings of your play, and — forgive my woman's curiosity — couldn't rest till I heard it. 'Tis beautiful.

NASH. What! 'twill do?

BEL. The play has but one fault.

NASH. I know the blot; 'tis its simplicity.

BEET. I've heard — (*aside to* SLIPPER) remember my orders — I've heard you call simplicity a classic excellence.

NASH. True; a classic excellence, but not a modern advantage. No; I'm told — for I never go to a play — that nothing is so marketable as a complex seduction, wound up with an elaborate suicide. A good murder is now the very life of a drama. Thus, if a playwright would fill his purse, he should take a hint from the sugar-bakers, and always refine his commodity with blood.

BEET. Pray, delight us with a scene; and then Belinda will promise to see your house. (*Aside to* SLIPPER.) Get Mr. Baxter down-stairs.

BEL. It must be a love-scene, then; above all things, a love-scene. (*Aside to* CLAPTRAP.) Make sure of Derby's escape.

BEET. (*Aside to* NASH) — Mark that, — a love-scene. (*To* SLIPPER *aside.*) Now, then; I'll cover his retreat. (*They sit.*)

BEL. Well, sir; enter a bleeding heart.

NASH. Hem! (*Reading MS.*) "Scene the third." This I think ingenious: the lovers being surprised, the hero is crammed into a clothes-press. His rival enters, attended by the gaoler of the heroine. Here ensues a dialogue full of wit.

BEET. Now for the foils.

BEL. I'm dying for the dialogue.

NASH. Here's a blank. As I wish this scene to be particularly brilliant, I've left it to the extempore genius of the actors. After the talk, the heroine sings an Italian canzonet.

BEL. There's the one fault. Is there sufficient English in the play?

NASH. Fault! 'Tis its one beauty. Nothing was ever writ in English that wouldn't have been finer in something else. Look at even Milton. Isn't Milton's meaning too heavy for English? — Like a giant walking on a skylight, doesn't he every minute threaten to fall through?

BEET. But all this time, your hero's in the clothes-press.

NASH. See you the skill that gets him off. After the song, the rival pleads his suit — the gaoler looking on. Madam, imagine the alderman the gaoler — yourself the cruel fair — and me —

BEL. What can I possibly imagine you?

NASH. Your passionate adorer. Now comes the incident with the white apron. You must suppose me on my knee. —

BEL. Nay, I have the most sluggish fancy. I never could suppose such condescension.

NASH. Behold! (*Kneels.*) Now, mark the di-

rections. The gaoler — get up, alderman — stands musing, apart. I tenderly press your hand — whilst the concealed lover —

BEL. What of him?

NASH. By means of a confederate, escapes.

BEL. What! you and the gaoler looking on?

NASH. No; for you drop your white apron — I hasten to restore it — you fall into my arms, seemingly overcome by my devotion — whilst the confederate seizes the gaoler — and with a dagger at his throat holds him to the spot!

(DERBY *and* BAXTER *appear with* SLIPPER *at the door.*)

BEET. And is all this practicable?

NASH. What more easy? (*Gives MS. to* CLAPTRAP.) See, ma'am — I am on my knee — I press your hand — you drop the apron — (BELINDA *lets handkerchief fall*) bravo! — I restore it — excellent — you faint — (*As* NASH *is about to return her the handkerchief, she sinks on his shoulder;* CLAPTRAP *seizes the alderman, holding the MS. at his throat, when* DERBY *and* BAXTER *run off.*)

SLIPP. (*Aside to* BELINDA) He's safe!

CLAPT. (*Aside to* BEETLE) He's gone!

NASH. Capital! Bravo! bravo!

BEET. Excellent! excellent!

ACT II.

SCENE I. — NASH'S *Apartments.*

Enter BELINDA *and* SLIPPER.

SLIPP. And now, ma'am, to take a peep at his honour's cabinet.

BEL. No: lock the doors. I've seen enough.

SLIPP. Enough, ma'am! When he has left you the keys to view all over the house? And isn't it fine?

BEL. As a Chinese lanthorn.

SLIPP. The hangings, and curtains, chosen with so just a taste!

BEL. So impartial, certainly; for no one colour has been neglected. Come, Slipper; we'll not wait for Mr. Nash's return.

SLIPP. Dear ma'am, the squire and alderman were suddenly sent for by the mayor: it may be state matters that detain them. Do first rummage his honour's cabinet of curiosities.

BEL. Well, but a glance: for his honour being absent, the cabinet loses its crowning wonder.

SLIPP. Lud! I'd forgotten to lock the pink room. I'll join you directly, my lady. (*Exit* BELINDA *into cabinet.*) Now, if I can but see dear Mr. Casket! [*Exit.*

Enter CLAPTRAP *and* CASKET.

CLAPT. The squire not within, — when I heard at Alderman Beetle's that the lady Belinda and her uncle were here to view the mansion?

CASK. A despatch from the mayor called his honour out; the alderman went with him, and the ladies returned home.

CLAPT. Ladies?

CASK. Madam Belinda and Mrs. Slipper. (*Aside.*) He mustn't know the maid is here: 'twould spoil our tête-à-tête. Is your business particular?

CLAPT. Momentous. The gentleman below is the new actor for Squire Nash's play.

CASK. The actor may call again. For my part, I only trust his honour's character mayn't be blown; but when a man of breeding stoops to write plays, his friends may tremble for his reputation.

CLAPT. Many examples declare that truth.

CASK. A gentleman may pen a charade — or a riddle, and no harm done. But to drudge at a play —

CLAPT. Be pacified; between us, the squire's play is the darkest riddle ever guessed at.

CASK. Is it so? Then there's hope. I wouldn't leave his honour for a bagatelle; no, confound me! But there's no living with a man who writes plays.

CLAPT. I'm afraid not; or poor living at the best.

CASK. I couldn't take his wages; no, damn a play!

CLAPT. Nay, you might take his wages, and help to damn his play, too.

CASK. Ha! ha! very true; I shall treasure the hint for self-defence. (*Aside.*) And now to finish my perjury to Mrs. Slipper. [*Exit.*

CLAPT. I knew Nash and the alderman were away, but for the women —

Enter DERBY.

DERB. Where's the lady?

CLAPT. Gone, sir; gone, whilst I ran to tell you Nash was called from home.

DERB. Mischief! I am resolved to carry her off to-night, and wanted but this interview to win her to the scheme. For this, I have ventured into the lion's den.

CLAPT. And with true romantic courage, being first assured that the lion was out. If you're still for heroic peril, you'll stay and view his majesty's palace: if for shameful safety, you'll follow me.

[*Exit.*

DERB. Palace! 'Tis a hall for harlequin. Could I but have seen her! for what with the press and hurry of to-night, the vigilance of her uncle, and — no, there's no way but to write a line, convey it to her in the rooms — Write! here's pen and ink: time presses — now, ha! ha! out of pure bravado will I indite my brief epistle here. (*Sits at table writing.*) "I have considered everything, and am determined on instant marriage."

Enter MRS. CORAL.

(*Writing.*) "Let us to-night defy all future accident."

MRS. C. (*Aside*) This must be his honour's gentleman! the secretary, no doubt. — Sir.

DERB. Ma'am! (*Aside.*) What simple antique is this?

MRS. C. I wished to see Squire Nash; but since he's from home, perhaps, Mr. Secretary, you'll be just as good.

DERB. Secretary!

MRS. C. I was told I should find his honour's gentleman — if you're not the secretary, —

DERB. Yes, yes. (*Aside.*) I'll fall in with this. — Perfectly right: I am the secretary — you see I was just writing for his honour. A stranger, I presume, to our city?

MRS. C. Yes, sir; myself and my niece Louisa arrived last night. Alack! that we ever came! for we are ruined past hope.

DERB. What has befallen the fair Louisa?

MRS. C. Ruin, sir; though she doesn't know it. A year ago, she was cheerful as the day; then she pined and changed, till at last the doctors said her only hope was at Bath. And so, sir, we somehow got together twenty guineas, in a kid-skin purse, — but, Mr. Secretary, may I trust you?

DERB. Assure yourself: I am already interested for your charming niece.

MRS. C. Well, sir, all the money — with a little ring which Louisa prizes beyond gold — was taken from my pocket on our way from Bristol.

DERB. And on this accident, you came to consult Mr. Nash?

MRS. C. Why, sir, I've heard my brother talk so much of the squire, — he's his fellow townsman, — and knowing nobody here, and being well-nigh beside myself, —

DERB. You were right to wait upon his honour. Doubt not, he will find means to restore your loss.

MRS. C. May I hope so?

DERB. Calm yourself. Nothing escapes his vigilance; ere this he may know of the accident.

MRS. C. If I could but think so! For the dear child —

(BELINDA *is coming from room in scene. Pauses on seeing* DERBY.)

DERB. Nay, rely on me. Louisa shall be my immediate care.

BEL. (*Aside*) Louisa! his care!

DERB. In a brief time, I will convince you of the truth of my professions.

BEL. (*Aside*) My uncle was right. A false libertine!

MRS. C. But you'll be secret? For I am a born gentlewoman, sir; and Louisa is no less, — you'll be secret?

DERB. Trust my honour — my prudence.

BEL. (*Aside*) No doubt — no doubt. The traitor!

MRS. C. And, sir, we may hope to hear from you? — Here, sir, is my address.

DERB. (*Reading card*) "Mrs. Coral, — Westgate Street." I will lose no instant to assure you how sincerely I sympathise with the beautiful Louisa.

BEL. (*Aside*) Westgate Street! — The beautiful Louisa!

MRS. C. That we should find such a friend! Good-day, sir; you'll be sure to be —

DERB. Discreet as vigilant. (*Shows off* MRS. C.) Now is my prying rightly served! I thought to worm some curious secret — to have a laugh at Nash; and —

(BELINDA *comes down.*)

Belinda! they told me you had left the house.

BEL. True; but on second thoughts, I felt 'twas right I should carefully view the place. It is —

DERB. A raree-show well worth one peep. And now, Belinda, my heart is —

BEL. Very handsome; and yet I spy new improvements. Now, in the parlour, there's —

DERB. I say, my heart, Belinda, is —

BEL. A worn-out fire-screen, hideously painted.

DERB. Belinda, — wilt listen to —

BEL. There! I could hear it all day.

DERB. And I could all day speak, my love.

BEL. The sound is so musical — so natural.

DERB. Nay, thou'lt make me a coxcomb.

BEL. And then the beautiful little Dutchman!

DERB. Why, what has a little Dutchman to do with my love?

BEL. Your love! La! I mean — there! I mean the eight-day cuckoo-clock on the staircase.

DERB. Belinda!

BEL. Is it true that the little Hollander on the dial-plate to mark the time of winding-up, knocks down only one skettle per day?

DERB. Really, 'tis a compliment to Dutch vivacity I cannot certify. I cry a truce, Belinda! Our love is now too serious to let us tilt with words.

BEL. (*Aside*) The hypocrite!

DERB. I cannot be content with the vague promise of this morning. I have followed you to declare my plans, to —

Enter CLAPTRAP.

CLAPT. Run, sir; run — eh! madam, here?

DERB. Is Nash come back?

CLAPT. The lion is now mounting the staircase. Fly, if you would not be devoured. (*Aside.*) The lady here, — the maid must be at hand. Ha! the valet — I scent infidelity. [*Exit.*

BEL. If he find us together, your plan — however subtle — must be defeated. Let me be safe from the house; then escape as best you may. Till then, step into his cabinet, (*aside*) where you may hear and profit.

DERB. (*Aside*) Luckily the old dame's story may excuse my visit.

BEL. Hide — hide and listen; (*aside*) for now comes my cue to tease. (DERBY *goes into the cabinet.*)

Enter NASH *and* BEETLE.

NASH. Plague on business! plague on honours! Madam, can I be forgiven? Look yes; for absence, followed by frowns, were death with torment.

BEL. Absence! I vow, sir, I haven't for an instant missed you. How could I, when every object here presented the taste, the sentiment of the owner?

NASH. You think the hut — the hut is habitable?

BEL. I could live here all my days. 'Tis a fairy temple!

NASH. And if it were a ruin, you, like the pearl, must make the shell desirable, by dwelling in it. Hem!

BEL. Then the cabinet —

NASH. Why, I must confess, there is something in the cabinet. But all that it contains — all is at your disposal.

BEL. What! the paintings — and —

NASH. Every touch of paint.

BEL. And the bronzes?

NASH. And every ounce of bronze.

BEET. That is, Belinda, when you marry.

BEL. (*Aside to* BEETLE) Oh! I don't forget the penalty. Well, if the world would not say I was bought, —

NASH. Bought!

BEL. Ay, — a marriage effected by such things, —

NASH. Nay, matches *are* brought about by mere paintings, and by mere bronze.

BEET. Then why hesitate? Belinda, you consent?

BEL. The cabinet has its attractions, —

BEET. (*To* NASH) I wish you joy.

NASH. Humph! shouldn't you rather compliment the furniture?

BEET. (*Aside to* NASH) Oh! 'tis her giddiness. You'll give me your promise — your written promise?

NASH. I'll consider it.

BEET. Come, Belinda.

Enter SLIPPER.

Slipper! what's the matter?

SLIPP. Nothing, sir: I had forgotten to lock a door, sir; and (*aside*) that impertinent Mr. Claptrap! — as his honour gave us charge of the keys — (*aside*) — I'm so fluttered, — and as madam's going, I'll lock the cabinet. (*Runs to the cabinet door; screams, and suddenly closes it.*)

NASH. How now?

SLIPP. (*Aside*) Mr. Derby! Oh, sir! nothing, sir. Your picture! —

NASH. What's in my picture that a woman should scream at it?

SLIPP. It's so like life, sir. I mean, sir — just then, it so resembled my dear grandfather;

that is, sir, as the light fell, sir, I could have vowed it — it winked at me.

NASH. Wink at *you?* Young woman, even pictures have reputations — (*Locks the cabinet-door and takes the key.*)

BEL. (*Aside*) Now am I more than revenged! Ay, sir, secure the key: for if what's locked up be in truth so animated, I may fear some rival.

NASH. Never! or let me die that day.

BEL. You'll give the key, now, to some other lady?

NASH. Not to Venus on her bended knees.

BEL. May I believe it, for indeed, indeed, and spite of all disguise, I am mightily taken with the very object that — that startled Slipper.

NASH. Oh, spare me! a poor thing!

BEL. Heigho! I could wish to be in its company for ever.

NASH. Then, you do admire it?

BEL. The vivacity — the expression — the fire, —

NASH. Why, it is like — it is like. And since the object finds favour in your eyes, I'll treasure it (*putting key in pocket*) for them alone.

BEL. Come, Slipper. (*Aside to her.*) Hush! I know all. (*To* NASH.) I trust your faith, now?

NASH. The arrow's in my heart: I swear and bleed.

BEL. (*Aside*) And now to visit the beautiful Louisa. [*Exeunt* BEL. *and* SLIPP.

NASH. (*To* BEET.) What a taste she has for the fine arts!

BEET. Her taste's infallible. And now, your promise; a line or two will serve; but, to-night, just to humour me, I must have your written promise. [*Exit.*

NASH. A written promise! Can she have really forgotten that spark, and can she really admire me? I'm sixty-five. What of it? All people aren't agreed in their choice of seasons; some admire spring: the more judicious prefer autumn. I may live to see my eldest son a — humph! — what shall he be? Judge — bishop — physician?

Enter JACK BAXTER.

Now, if my son's a judge, — if he should reach the bench, —

BAXT. I hope, your honour, he wouldn't forget his father's friends at the bar?

NASH. Nay, Jack Baxter, no matter who may sentence, thou art safe from neglect.

BAXT. Sentence! Oh, your honour, I'm returning to respectability. I was a careless rogue, but now, —

NASH. You're a painstaking spy. 'Tis a great backward jump; a few more such leaps, and you're at your journey's end.

BAXT. And yet the hindrances thrown in my way! There's that Lavender Tom, the marquis as he's called, and Dropper, my old friends, — they're now in Bath, fine as lords.

NASH. At whose cost?

BAXT. They've been lecturing at Tunbridge and Bristol. Ah, sir! for a man just warming up to virtue to look at their laced coats — it's quite affecting.

NASH. I acknowledge your struggles. But take comfort: you may one day see them both at Tyburn.

BAXT. Oh, sir! I always hope the best. Still, I want to be quite at ease in my mind. I want to put a solemn question.

NASH. So! A case of conscience! What disturbs you, Jack?

BAXT. You see, your honour, I'm nine and thirty — I've looked keenly on the world — and before I can take kindly to a new life, — I want

seriously to ask you, — seeing how some fortunes are made, and how some who make 'em live and prosper, — I want to ask you, if you do really think it wrong to pick a pocket?

NASH. In truth, Jack, the question is one for the moralities; but, unfortunately, 'tis generally settled by the hangman. So, 'tis safer, perhaps, to watch your friends, than labour with them. They know nothing of your conversion?

BAXT. They must suspect something.

NASH. How can they imagine you are become honest?

BAXT. My wardrobe's growing shabby.

NASH. Never fear: thou hast those certain signs of a great man, — a face and air that defy the tailor. Wert thou in a hermit's gown and hood — Newgate, pure Newgate, would peep from under it. Business: were your late friends communicative?

BAXT. No; we only had one fling together, for old acquaintance sake; we scorned to play for money. I won this bit of an old-fashioned ring of Dropper.

NASH. With initials, "H. W.," in black hair. It may be inquired for. I'll place it with other suspected toys in my cabinet. (*Goes to cabinet:*

unlocks the door; pauses and comes down. DERBY *comes from the cabinet, and waits behind* NASH *and* BAXTER.) Stay, who was at the tables last night?

BAXT. Hardly an elbow stirring. Mr. Derby and I had a little hazard. Isn't he a fine gentleman?

NASH. The finer the goose, the better the plucking.

BAXT. That maxim, your honour, deserves letters of gold. Still, must Mr. Derby be ruined? Sometimes — for I've a little liking for him — I feel about me a sort of fluttering pity; then I hardly know what to do.

NASH. No! Rattle the dice; and pity will fly away directly.

DERB. (*Aside*) So! a most knowing teacher.

BAXT. There's the devil in the bones, to be sure. Yet, your worship, when compassion, —

NASH. Jack Baxter, plain words for plain things. I retained you as spy and sharper, that is, as a rascal: if you're getting above your business, say so, and our bargain's up.

BAXT. Oh! your honour, I hope I know my place.

NASH. Then don't press beyond it. Virtue,

like gold lace, should be the privileged wear of your betters: now, as you can't afford the real thing, you must make what show you can with copper washed.

BAXT. And as finery goes, your honour, a very good show, too.

NASH. For Mr. Derby, when I marry Madam Belinda, —

BAXT. Why, your honour, folks say she's to have Mr. Derby.

NASH. A profligate, abandoned coxcomb! No; happily, Belinda has taste. And when this hand is offered against his, can there be any doubt which she must accept? Can there, I ask?

DERB. (*Thrusting his hand between them*) Your judgment, Mr. Baxter?

NASH. Mr. Derby!

DERB. Come, your judgment? Is the hand of a gentleman as worthy in a lady's eye as that of a secret sharper, — a hand as spotted as the dice it trades with? Your judgment, Mr. Baxter?

BAXT. Why, for hands —

NASH. (*To* DERBY) Don't press him: for, rely on't, his verdict must be against you.

DERB. Well plotted, Richard Nash! Mr. Baxter, though grateful for your sympathies, per-

mit me, henceforth, to avoid you. Well plotted! monarch and philanthropist, dealer in benevolence, founder of hospitals for the sick!

NASH. Nay, more: I am about to build an asylum for the impertinent and the eaves-dropping; when 'tis up, I pray, command me.

DERB. Sir, 'twas accident made me a listener. I disdain secrecy; as a gentleman, scorn disguise.

NASH. And your business in my house?

DERB. 'Twas to plead for the distress of others. In ignorance, I intruded into your cabinet, when I found the door suddenly locked upon me, and as suddenly opened.

NASH. In my cabinet! (*Aside.*) So, this was the picture that winked at the maid; and the mistress, too, owned that she was mightily taken with the same object. I begin to fear no son of mine will be lord chief justice. (*To* DERBY.) And 'twas the distress of others put you in my cabinet?

DERB. Let this (*giving card*) with the brief story I shall tell, convince you that mine was wholly a visit of charity — (*aside*) charity forgive me!

NASH. (*Reading card*) Mrs. Coral, Westgate Street! Mrs. Coral!

Enter Mrs. CORAL.

MRS. C. (*Curtseying to* NASH) At your service, sir. I heard from a young lady you were come home, and fearing that your secretary here might forget —

NASH. Eh! secretary!

MRS. C. Isn't that your worship's secretary? To me he declared as much.

NASH. And he disdains secrecy — as a gentleman, scorns disguise!

MRS. C. There could be no disguise: for he was at that table, writing, he said, for your worship —

(DERBY *makes for the table;* NASH *intercepts him, and snatches the paper left there by* DERBY.)

NASH. By your leave, secretary. Yes — (*aside*) I'll twit him, now — I had taken him on trial — given him a letter to write for me. Now, for a sample of the fellow's brains. — (*Reads.*) "My ever dear —"

DERB. "Belinda." 'Tis plain, sir; "My ever dear Belinda."

NASH. (*Aside*) In my own house, too! (*Reads.*) "I have considered everything, and am determined on instant marriage!"

MRS. C. I wish your worship joy, ten thousand times.

NASH. Thank'ee. (*Aside.*) I should need it. — (*Reads.*) "Let us defy —"

DERB. (*Snatching the paper from* NASH) I perceive my style fails to delight, and so give up my too ambitious hopes. (*To* MRS. C.) His worship will himself now satisfy you. (*To* NASH.) Kind sir, farewell; 'twould be a keener pain to quit your service, did I not know the treasure you possess in the unblemished virtue and active genius of Mr. Baxter. [*Exit.*

NASH. (*Aside*) Foregad! he has spirit — just myself at his age. (*To* MRS. C.) So — this is your card?

MRS. C. (*Offering card*) Oh, your worship! (*Recognising ring on his finger.*)

NASH. What does the woman stare at?

MRS. C. You are, indeed, a conjurer!

NASH. Am I?

MRS. C. But all the world says so, — you know everything.

NASH. All the world's right.

MRS. C. Rogues can't deceive you.

NASH. Why, (*looking at* BAXTER) I do know a rogue when I see one.

MRS. C. Your worship's a match for every knave in Bath, I warrant me, else you had never got me back my stolen property.

NASH. Eh!

MRS. C. Dear your honour! I should know the ring upon your finger from a million!

NASH. You would? — Jack Baxter, — dissolve.

BAXT. Phewgh! Master Dropper, you are trapped. [*Exit.*

NASH. And this ring is yours?

MRS. C. My niece's, sir: I took it from her, for 'twas the gift of a person — a young fellow — wandering last year in Wales. Do you know who robbed us?

NASH. I've discovered the whole matter, and shall return you the property.

MRS. C. We're bound to bless you; for if we had lost the twenty guineas, —

NASH. Guineas!

MRS. C. The guineas that were with the ring, in the same purse.

NASH. Pray, what brings you to Bath?

MRS. C. To keep alive my niece. The doctors, sir, advised the journey; and Louisa's father, — he's a poor curate, sir, at Swansea, — with past savings and present borrowing, made up a sum to serve us here. We were robbed on our way from Bristol.

NASH. And whom do you suspect?

MRS. C. Nobody, sir; there were but two other passengers — and they had swords and ruffles; were, indeed, quite gentlemen.

NASH. Quite gentlemen!

MRS. C. One particularly; for he swore, I think, in French; besides, he talked of — of philosophy, and was called marquis!

NASH. (*Aside*) The pebble-hearted ruffians! I see, I must be steward here. (*Takes out purse.*)

MRS. C. (*Half aside*) Lud! how happy such a load of gold would make us!

NASH. Would it? Your brother's a poor curate? — He borrowed money in the hope of saving his child? — of that money you have been robbed? Here is about double the amount; you say — I heard you — 'twould make you happy. (*Placing purse in her hand.*) Be happy!

MRS. C. Your worship!

NASH. No words; be happy.

Enter CASKET.

So, sirrah, — wilt inform me what place is this? Tavern — coffee-house, — or what? Oblige me; tell me, where I am?

CASK. Is't not your honour's mansion?

NASH. I thought so; but I find it a public walk — a place to plot and lounge in. How came a stranger in my cabinet?

CASK. In truth, your honour, so long as you suffer players to visit you, I can be answerable for no plotting — no impertinence.

NASH. Players!

CASK. Here comes one — (*Aside.*) A spoil-sport rascal.

Enter CLAPTRAP.

NASH. (*To* CLAPTRAP) My friend; I suspect, nay —more, I am pretty sure thou art a sort of — of clever rogue.

CLAPT. Oh, sir, only get the world of your mind, and my fortune's made.

NASH. You knew nothing of Madam Belinda's being here — nothing of the man locked up in my cabinet?

CLAPT. Ha, sir! this it is to have business at a house where the head servant wants character. Now, an innocent man may be doubted, when the bribe may have gone into the pocket of the valet.

CASK. Bribe! I apprehend the insinuation! Your worship, whoever was in the cabinet was one of his fellows. Shall I count the snuff-boxes?

NASH. Then you did bring somebody here?

CLAPT. Certainly; the man to act the lover — (*aside*) that's no fable: the new player.

NASH. And where is he?

CASK. Ay, tell his honour, where is he?

NASH. If you brought the lover, where *is* the lover?

CLAPT. Where! (*Aside.*) Ha! anybody for an escape. Where, sir? — there, sir! (*Pointing to* WILTON *as he enters.*)

MRS. C. (*Aside*) As I live, the young man who followed Louisa. (*Aside to* NASH.) Sir, do you know who that person is?

NASH. (*Aside to her*) To be sure: he is, or wishes to be, a lover.

MRS. C. And so he does. (*Aside.*) Wonderful man! he can tell everything.

CLAPT. (*Aside to* WILTON) That's his honour, sir; you couldn't have come in better season.

[*Runs off.*

WILT. If, sir, as I fear, I have ill-timed my visit, I trust — (*Seeing* MRS. CORAL, *aside.*) Louisa's aunt! what miracle brings her to Bath?

NASH. (*Going up to him*) My good man, I have heard enough: you'll not do.

WILT. Not do!

NASH. I'm sorry for it; but, no — you can't be accepted.

WILT. Accepted! Why, sir, is it possible you are aware of my pretensions to —

NASH. To be sure; fully aware. And I say again, — you won't do.

MRS. C. (*Aside*) Who could have told him?

WILT. (*Aside*) Has he learnt this from the aunt? Is it quite clear, sir, that you can even now judge my qualifications?

NASH. If I can't — tell me who can? Quite clear; so clear, that I can see and hear at once, you haven't a single advantage.

MRS. C. (*Aside*) I always said as much to Louisa.

WILT. Mr. Nash, —

NASH. I wish to be delicate; but I was certain, from the first glance — that you were dull as a tombstone.

WILT. Sir, —

NASH. And so far from my notion of what a lover ought to be, that I'd as soon look for vivacity in a mummy — or for passion in an air-pump. Casket, show that person out. Ma'am (*to* MRS. CORAL), I have a word to say about your niece.

(*To* WILTON, *who is following.*) Young man, be satisfied — you won't do.

[*Exit with* MRS. CORAL *into cabinet.*

WILT. I would 'twere lawful to beat an old man in his own house! Won't do? Pshaw! I should rather laugh at his impertinence; for Louisa is doubtless here, and so — here may end my happy journey. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A View of the Orange Grove. Enter DROPPER *and* LAVENDER TOM.

DROPP. I tell you, marquis, when a man turns thief and blackleg, he shouldn't trifle with time; he should never forget that idleness is the root of evil.

TOM. Thief! *Mort de ma vie!* Dropper, your philosophy is damned gross.

DROPP. What's the difference, Tom, — nice, Lavender Tom, for you've earned your name, — twixt drawing a pocket with naked fingers, and with bits of pasteboard?

TOM. Immeasurable. All the difference between manual drudgery and mental calculation.

DROPP. Then the physic for your conscience is —

TOM. Philosophy. I consider a hand of cards just an army of mercenaries; and when I play, believe myself no more than an Alexander — a Pompey — or a Julius Cæsar. That's true philosophy; *ou le diable m'emporte!*

DROPP. Scholarship has made you lazy and particular.

TOM. And given me, besides philosophy, a fine taste.

DROPP. See what a man loses by taste. Whilst you were talking of heathen gods and goddesses to that girl from Swansea, I was industriously turning the penny.

TOM. *Comment?* How?

DROPP. I picked the old woman's pocket.

TOM. Barbarian! Vandal! Rob the fair — plunder the *beau sexe!*

DROPP. (*Showing purse*) See; twenty guineas!

TOM. Pillage lovely woman! But, as 'tis done, halves!

DROPP. Halves! Is that like Pompey and Julius Cæsar?

TOM. Certainly; quite their philosophy. Halves.

DROPP. Well, as we're to share everything — there. (*Gives him money in purse.*)

TOM. Dropper, 'twas a ruthless act; and yet, *par Dieu!* I spy its use. Yes; I shall first relieve, and then carry off.

DROPP. Pshaw! will you never learn — Eh! — here comes Jack Baxter.

TOM. Dropper, this being our first descent on Bath, let's hope we are unknown. Shun Baxter: he's a vulgar dog — inseparably of the *canaille.*

DROPP. Come, marquis, Jack Baxter's an open fellow.

TOM. So is Jack of Spades!

DROPP. A fellow from whom one gets good advice.

TOM. An insufferable monitor: he never comes near me but I think I smell the odour of new hemp.

Enter BAXTER.

BAXT. So, Dropper! Tom, you look as blank as deuce-ace.

DROPP. Oh! Tom, like all great men, is free to have his leaden moments. But you are in haste, Jack?

BAXT. I have somebody to meet — (*aside*) — and somebody to miss. — (*Going — returns.*) Dropper, marquis, do you see that spark to the right? His name's Derby.

DROPP. Well?

BAXT. He haunts the tables — has money — and knows no more than a cherub.

DROPP. Art sure?

BAXT. I've tried and prospered; but as he's grown shy of me, like a man of honour, I give him up to my friends. Hook him, and hand him, (*aside*) and then, my proud ones, we hand you. [*Exit.*

DROPP. Marquis, an easy prize!

TOM. (*Looking off*) He certainly looks like one in a state of innocence. We'll now to the rooms: the women will, doubtless, be there; for I sent them tickets this morning. Dropper, your arm.

DROPP. To slight Jack, when he gives such intelligence!

TOM. Oh, learn of him all you can, and then, — shake him off.

DROPP. And isn't that ingratitude?

TOM. No: that is — philosophy. [*Exeunt.*

Scene III.

The Assembly Rooms; the stage represents a ball-room, filled with company. A minuet is concluded shortly after the scene opens, Belinda, Mrs. Coral, Louisa, Derby, Wilton, Lavender Tom, *and* Dropper *having in the interval come on at various entrances.* Nash *presiding.* Nash *leads out* Louisa *and* Lavender Tom.

Wilt. (*Aside to* Derby) See! by all my hopes — there — led out by Nash — is Louisa.

Nash. The next minuet.

Louis. (*Seeing* Wilton) Mr. Wilton!

Nash. Madam, suffer me to introduce — (*About to introduce her to* Lavender Tom.)

Louis. Spare me, sir; indeed I am suddenly unwell — I — (*Aside.*) Again, that odious man!

Visitors. The master's minuet — the master's minuet!

Nash. Hush! Impossible.

Lady Visitors. (*Crowding about* Nash) Dear sir, — pray delight us!

Nash. It cannot be — it is irregular.

1st Lady Visitor. On the eve of such an

event as the ceremony to-morrow, you cannot refuse.

NASH. Your grace, the laws of Bath, like the decrees of Lycurgus, are immutable.

2D LADY VISITOR. For once violate a harsh statute.

NASH. My dear countess, it must not be.

3D LADY VISITOR. I'll turn rebel! ladies, your voices — the master's minuet!

(*All the ladies crowd about* NASH; *and some, waving their handkerchiefs, others rapping with their fans, cry,* — "*The master's minuet!*")

NASH. I am vanquished. Musicians, my minuet!

DERB. (*Aside to* BELINDA) Dearest Belinda — 'Sdeath! here comes the alderman! — read this — (*giving her paper*) — and let a smile be your answer.

(BELINDA *is about to read the paper, when* NASH *approaches her; she suddenly places it in the pocket of her apron.*)

NASH (*To* BELINDA) Madam, the honour of your hand to walk a — (*seeing apron*) — what is that?

BEL. (*Aside*) I knew 'twould startle him. What, sir? an apron: white aprons are worn, are they not?

NASH. Yes, by waiting-women. (*Plucks off the apron, and gives it to* BEETLE *as he comes down.*)

BEL. Sir — (*Aside.*) The paper!

NASH. Alderman, I have fulfilled my duty: the further instruction of Madam Belinda now rests with you. Musicians! (*Turns up the stage, taking* BELINDA.)

BEET. (*Aside*) His duty — his — (*Paper falls out of apron: reads it.*) "I have considered everything, and am determined on instant marriage." His written consent!

(*Music.* — NASH *and* BELINDA *dance a minuet.*)

BEET. (*To* NASH *and* BELINDA) Joy — joy to both! and yet I —

NASH. No congratulations: business. (*Aside.*) Did the old fool think I'd forgotten my dancing?

BEET. I was about to say —

NASH. (*Taking out watch*) Eight o'clock. A country dance! Now to arrange partners with the learning of a garter king-at-arms.

(NASH *places partners. The dance is commenced, and continued until the scene closes.*)

ACT III.

SCENE I. — NASH'S *Apartments.*

Enter CLAPTRAP *and* SLIPPER.

SLIPP. Well, but to suspect Mr. Casket!

CLAPT. I allow, I didn't see him — I didn't hear him. I'm willing to give up my eyes and ears; really, that ought to satisfy a moderate woman.

SLIPP. Ha, Mr. Claptrap! you know our easy sex; as you allow so much, I must forgive you. And now, I've a secret for you. The alderman says 'Squire Nash has at last determined to marry Madam Belinda. Would you have thought it of so old a gentleman?

CLAPT. Why, with some men, courage comes late. I think 'twill be my own case.

SLIPP. Surely?

CLAPT. Now I recollect, a gipsy — foretelling all my happy escapes — prophesied I shouldn't marry till I was threescore.

SLIPP. Then you were to have escapes?

CLAPT. Yes ; I was to be thrice nearly hanged — on false evidence ; and thrice about to take a wife on no better testimony. Three times to escape the rope and the ring is to have great luck.

SLIPP. Wonderful, with such a face ! Marry the first time at threescore ! When my fortune was told, I was promised at sixty a third husband.

CLAPT. Oh, 'tis plain ! we were paired at our birth.

SLIPP. La ! Do you think so ?

CLAPT. Certain ; for, as the prophecy ran, I was to be a third husband.

SLIPP. What ! at sixty ?

CLAPT. At sixty. Fortune, in her mercy, has given me a long day. Now, for you, there's the valet to begin with.

SLIPP. No, Mr. Claptrap ; as you say, we were paired ; when I do marry, you shall be —

CLAPT. Not the first ; consider, you dote on me too much to think of surviving me ; and I love you too fondly to give you any cause of mourning. No ; I give place to Mr. Casket and the next gentleman. (*Going.*)

SLIPP. And will you leave me with —

CLAPT. You see, I have letters to take for his honour. Don't despair ; we shall meet at sixty.

SLIPP. But Mr. Claptrap, —

CLAPT. Never consider me; I tell you — I can wait. [*Exit.*

SLIPP. Wait! It's clear he has no more feeling than his own puppets. To accuse Mr. Casket, — well, he really is a well-bred person: smiles, and bows, and never contradicts. To be sure, he's not so clever as Mr. Claptrap; then again, clever husbands are always brutes. If I could now see Mr. Casket — lud! here comes his honour. [*Exit.*

Enter NASH *and* BAXTER.

NASH. Jack, you have a liberal mind.

BAXT. Oh, your honour!

NASH. For though a knave yourself, you refuse not applause to the roguery of others.

BAXT. The marquis is a genius, that's certain. Why, he makes the cards come to him as though they loved him. It's a great gift.

NASH. Nay, allow the benefit of education. And so, Mr. Derby is wholly lost?

BAXT. Quite gone, sir. Last night, as I said, Tom somehow fastened upon him, and didn't leave him till he had coaxed him out of the thousands.

NASH. Ha! ha! Tom has thrown away much science: for young Derby is poorer than King Bladud, when he fed porkers here at Bath.

BAXT. But when his uncle dies, the young fellow comes to a round sum. And so, he's to give Tom a bond for the amount.

NASH. Oh! he's to give him a bond to be paid when the uncle dies?

BAXT. Yes, it's rather hard upon Tom.

NASH. Why, doubtless, ready money would be more acceptable. Still, the uncle is very old?

BAXT. Yes; but, somehow, when people get to a certain age, further time seems lost upon 'em. I can't but say, it's hard upon Tom.

NASH. For once, I'll trade in life: I'll buy the deed. I owe the spark a turn, and the bond will put him in my power.

BAXT. Shall I tell the marquis you'll deal with him?

NASH. No: he'd suspect some villainy — from the messenger. Pray, how did Tom contrive to cheat Mr. Derby?

BAXT. La, sir! you can't think what a gentleman Tom is; he'd cheat anybody. It puzzles me to tell where he got — what I call — his white satin manners.

NASH. Stole 'em, no doubt.

Enter CASKET.

CASK. Alderman Beetle.

NASH. Jack, wait in that room. (JACK *retires.*) Let Sam run to Mr. Derby's lodgings with this letter — this to Madam Belinda — this to Mr. Dropper, and these two (*giving letters*) as directed. [*Exit* CASKET.

Enter BEETLE.

So, alderman, out betimes: but 'tis a stirring day for all of us.

BEET. Right, friend; and so my words shall be few. Do you really love my niece?

NASH. I think I may say, — yes.

BEET. And you'll marry her?

NASH. I may venture to reply, — no.

BEET. And why not?

NASH. Because whenever I marry, I am determined not to find all the love myself. And I seriously think, if two people are to become the same flesh, it shouldn't happen when there's the slightest risk that one side may have the palsy.

BEET. You should have weighed this before.

NASH. Time enough: though sentence be passed, and I've the nosegay in my hand, the cart's not drawn away.

BEET. But, squire, when I've your written promise of marriage —

NASH. Written! No — not a scratch.

BEET. I say, written; and your word to boot.

NASH. I don't deny my word — but I find the girl laughs at me, and I withdraw it. A man's in no danger as long as he talks his love, but to write it is to impale himself on his own pothooks.

BEET. And here (*showing paper*) you are, writhing — writhing.

NASH. Phoo! this is young Derby's scrawl.

BEET. Derby's! how know you that?

NASH. He wrote it in this room; wrote it, like a fine, bold fellow, with my own pen and ink.

BEET. The impudent! — What, shoot at you with your own pinion?

NASH. Why, I mustn't own that; for he wrote with a goose-quill. And yet, why not? Confound me, I may say with the fellow in "Chevy Chase" —

> "The gray-goose wing that was thereon,
> In my heart's-blood was wet!"

Come, alderman, that's happy?

BEET. You cast off Belinda?

NASH. I'd cast off an empress, if I found she wanted to run away.

BEET. But your word, — forfeit your word! A likely hero for a statue.

NASH. Alderman, I care not to be one of those heroes who win statues by being stones themselves. I tell you as I told you yesterday: Belinda is a fine, blooming creature, and I — I can say nothing worse for the match — I am sixty-five.

BEET. But your promise! A love of truth should compel you to the marriage.

NASH. 'Tis exactly that prevents me.

BEET. What!

NASH. A love of truth. For when a man takes a wife, he swears she shall be cherished, and not frost-bit.

BEET. I've cleared my doubts; good morning. (BAXTER *appears at back.*) Yet, allow me to hint that the family connections of Mr. Baxter — of Mr. Baxter, sir — are not to be despised.

NASH. Assuredly not — (*aside*) on the highway, and the moon down.

BEET. *He* mayn't pause to take ten thousand pounds.

NASH. I can answer for his alacrity.

BEET. And as I am more than ever opposed to Mr. Derby, and you fail in your contract, I'll immediately hand over Belinda and her fortune to Mr. Baxter — to the nephew of my old and esteemed friend, Lord Fog. [*Exit.*

BAXT. (*Coming down*) Oh, sir, did I ever hope such luck!

NASH. What! you heard the alderman?

BAXT. I couldn't help it: such words would go through flint. I must always bless you, sir.

NASH. Ha! ha! You'd never carry on the trick? You, marry a lady — you, a half-reformed rogue?

BAXT. Ha, sir! but such a match would quite finish me. I'd marry, and suppress my "Life."

NASH. To obtain ten thousand pounds is certainly to have honesty made easy.

BAXT. It must be; for I feel virtuous only thinking of it. You'll not stand in a penitent's way, sir?

NASH. But your connections, Jack? You have no lord for an uncle?

BAXT. I can't say I have, or I haven't. I have heard that the Baxters are an old family; though I can't exactly tell how we've been kept up.

NASH. Doubtless as some plants are kept up — by slips. However, make sure of the lady, and I may manage for your family. I may safely say that a race of Baxters came in with William the Conqueror.

BAXT. May you, indeed, squire?

NASH. Oh, yes: for there were thieves even in Normandy. Go, and do my errand: and as you do it, look for my good word. Take one of the servants; point Tom Lavender out; then let him have my card with compliments to meet me.

BAXT. I'm off, sir. And your worship's honour will stand my friend? If the alderman should inquire particularly —

NASH. I'll make you a most illustrious rascal, depend on't. (*Exit* BAXTER.) Now, but for me, that fellow's audacity might win a fortune. Yes, I am more convinced; the true philosopher's stone is only intense impudence. (*Looks at watch.*) I shall have time to work my plan. I'll first dose young Derby with a wholesome lie or two, lay bare to his eyes the knaves who have plundered him — marry him to Belinda — and consign my friend the marquis and his fellow to the mercies of the county turnkey. Yes — I'll give up Belinda. Alexander shall conquer his

own passions. To be sure, at sixty-five the victory is not so difficult.

DERBY *is shown in.*

Mr. Derby, I have heard of your great loss; you have my sympathy, though it cannot bring back what is gone.

DERB. (*Aside*) Not a shilling!

NASH. Trust me, Mr. Derby, I wish to console you.

DERB. Console me! Can you show me how I may recover my loss?

NASH. Recover! Why, he has been dead these three days.

DERB. Dead! of whom — of what do you speak?

NASH. Of your loss. Of your poor uncle, my friend.

DERB. What have I to learn? My uncle! Tell me quickly.

NASH. Apoplexy — dead — I'm executor.

DERB. Dead!

NASH. Surely, you have no other new calamity? What can have happened? Come, you may trust your uncle's executor.

DERB. Plainly, sir, I had last night determined

to fly with Belinda. I found her perverse — trifling. The assembly over, I watched for her; she, as I felt, avoided me. Stung, irritated, I dashed to the tables: I lost and won — lost and won. My fortune turned — I lost all I had!

NASH. A common case: then, of course, you came away?

DERB. 'Twas not enough to lose the present, but I staked the future. I was in the devil's gripe — he held me fast. Step by step, he led me, dreaming, down the gamester's burning path, till I awoke in — perdition.

NASH. Coarse words, Mr. Derby — coarse words. In the language of polite life, you anticipated your uncle's benevolence? And the good man has been liberal. A legacy is left you —

DERB. A legacy! Why, sir, the whole estate —

NASH. Goes to another person. Your uncle has left a sum sufficient to buy you a company. In a month Belinda will be of age, and she has the true spirit for a soldier's wife.

DERB. A legacy! Destruction!

NASH. And you set up for a gamester — you, with your natural defects? Yes, sir, defects. Why, you have a high spirit — quick blood and a full heart. Sir, I'll give you some advice. For

as you have been beggared possibly by rascals, you may be forced for future bread to turn rascal yourself; don't be offended — 'tis a common change. With such prospects, I'll briefly imagine for you what I consider the perfect model of a thorough gamester.

DERB. Sir, I am your debtor.

NASH. Take a skeleton from the box of an anatomist — give its head an immovable mask of flesh — clothe the skull, but leave all beside dry bones — make it calculate, but not feel — give it motion, but not life — and there's your model, sir, — there's your trading gamester.

DERB. You — you thus moralise!

NASH. And who more able — since for the last thirty years I've seen the death's heads at work?

DERB. Was this sermon studied for me? Why was I sent for, — why —

NASH. I wished to condole with you on the loss of your uncle — and congratulate you, since I withdraw on your approaching nuptials.

DERB. A beggar's nuptials!

NASH. Tut! say nothing of your loss to Belinda, — but marry her: the alderman may in time relent, and give you up her fortune.

DERB. Do you think me so sunk in infamy?

NASH. Coarse words again. Infamy! 'tis done every day, and called convenience.

DERB. And you truly mean this?

NASH. Behold the evidence.

BELINDA *is shown in.*

Madam, I thank this prompt answer to my letter. You may now guess its purport. I quit the field. Take hands, and be happy.

BEL. What! has the alderman consented?

NASH. On the contrary; acquainted with my resignation, he is now seeking another candidate. Hearken to a friend's advice: as you are both great criminals, run, take sanctuary in a church. Captain Derby, again I congratulate you.

[*Bows and exit.*

BEL. Captain Derby!

DERB. Belinda — I — (*aside*) I cannot look at her.

BEL. What is all this? Well, sir, do you mean to run away with me, or shall I go home again? Last night, I own, I had not wholly lost my jealous scruples, but I have since talked to the "beautiful Louisa," and — and — yes, I ask you to forgive me. Last night, I refused my hand: to-day, I frankly give it.

DERB. Last night, it would have blest me beyond imagination; to-day, I must not take it.

BEL. Derby! Oh, you are changed — ill. What has happened?

DERB. Last night, I cast away the hopes of life — to-day, I am a beggar.

BEL. Take my hand!

DERB. I dare not — should not. The misery that must track me I'll endure alone. I will not add to its bitterness by making you the partner.

BEL. Derby!

DERB. No, Belinda; it must not be. Do not speak to me — for I feel scorched with shame, and cannot answer. I leave you to a better, to a happier man. (*Rushes into room at side.*)

BEL. My idle jealousy has done this! I have been vain, volatile; till now, I never fully knew my love.

Enter BAXTER.

BAXT. Tom's come. (*Seeing her: aside.*) Madam Belinda! Luck again! Fortune must have fallen in love with me. Madam, — (*aside*) — yes, I'll begin the siege: at once, throw a few compliments at her. Madam, — I — I — I hope you are well?

BEL. Perfectly well, sir.

BAXT. The — the — hem! — the alderman, ma'am, is a fine gentleman!

BEL. He is fortunate, sir, in your good opinion!

BAXT. (*Aside*) She seems a little restless. I must fix her. Of course, ma'am, you have heard of the alderman's choice?

BEL. His choice!

BAXT. You know the certain happy man? Eh!

BEL. Indeed, sir, I am very dull: explain yourself.

BAXT. (*Falling on his knees*) There, ma'am!

BEL. Sir! What does this mean?

BAXT. (*Aside*) Well! I thought every woman understood that! Isn't this plain, ma'am?

BEL. Rise, sir — I command you.

BAXT. Not all the power of man shall move me, ma'am, until —

Enter NASH.

NASH. (*To* BAXTER) Jack!

BAXT. Your honour!

NASH. You're a fool — get out of the way. Go; — but be at hand. [*Exit* BAXTER.

BEL. Tell me, sir; tell me all. Is Mr. Derby —

NASH. Ruined? Oh, yes; now his only hope must be to brave the alderman, and get your fortune, for in his own words, he is a beggar. Look: there he sits; a monument of stupid misery. Go, madam; prevail on him to marry you, for 'tis the only desperate remedy. (*Shows her off.*) Now, — for I have left my philosopher, —

Enter LAVENDER TOM.

TOM. Again and again, squire, I apologise.

NASH. No, no — not a word.

TOM. I confess myself a heathen for my negligence. Pray, put my name down for the distressed colliers — the rooms — the hospital — and, indeed, for every possible charity. *Oh, la belle charité!*

NASH. Munificent. But, Mr. Lavender, when I left you, I was about to say that, hearing of your last night's good luck, —

TOM. I hope 'tisn't generally published: creditors are so apt to magnify one's little successes. I speak, Mr. Nash, as to a man skilled in the philosophy of life.

NASH. Oh, sir! The truth is, I learn everything by the secret virtue of my office. And as king of Bath, —

TOM. By the bye, that white hat, — he! he! — is't not a very extraordinary crown for your majesty?

NASH. Perhaps it is; and yet it has two eminent advantages: it is pure, and it is cheap.

TOM. But why — why do you wear a white hat?

NASH. In confidence, I'll tell you. I am — you must admit — the monarch of a very mixed people. And as, like Haroun Alraschid, I go at all times, and in all places, among 'em, I wear this very particular hat, that nobody may —

TOM. Yes, —

NASH. Steal it! You will perceive that, like a politic potentate, I know and am regulated by the secret wishes of a large body of my subjects. (*Lays his hat on table.*) To proceed: as ruler, I ought to dispense justice. You last night won a great sum of young Derby?

TOM. The proof is to come.

NASH. How?

TOM. I am a simple fool. I won all the loose cash he had; and then I gave him credit. I'm to have his bond to be paid on the death of his uncle. Now, as to death —

NASH. You are quite safe: the poor man has already one leg in the grave.

TOM. But your people with one leg in the grave are so devilish long before they put in the other. They seem like birds, to repose better on one leg.

NASH. I assure you, he's at death's door, and must soon be let in. To begin: he has a horrible gout.

TOM. Gout goes for nothing.

NASH. An afflicting asthma.

TOM. That's better.

NASH. A recent attack of dropsy.

TOM. Come; we shall do. And yet, —

NASH. And yet, if you doubt, and want the bond cashed, I on easy terms will do it.

TOM. My dear squire, that is the very best thing you have said yet.

NASH. 'Twas to make the offer I sent for you. No thanks — it is my duty. We'll have a bond drawn up, and —

TOM. A curious chance: I have something in my pocket, — and was about to wait on Derby for his signature, when your man accosted me. (*Gives paper.*)

NASH. This appears to be regularly drawn, —

TOM. (*Aside*) King! he's an emperor!

Enter CASKET, WILTON, *and* CLAPTRAP.

CASK. Sir — this man — this player — will insist —

NASH. (*To* WILTON) How now, my friend! I thought you had your answer?

WILT. (*To* CLAPTRAP) Now, fellow, since you have confessed the trick to me, — say who I really am.

CLAPT. Your honour, I made a mistake. This is Mr. Wilton; a gentleman, as I hear, of birth and means, — and upon my honour, not one of Mr. Powel's company. (WILTON *gives letters to* NASH.)

NASH. Sir, your pardon. And now, your visit —

WILT. I have heard of the imprudence of Mr. Derby.

TOM. (*Aside*) *Peste!* 'Twill be all over Bath; if so, I can hardly hope to cheat Dropper of his lawful half.

WILT. Learning at his lodgings that he was with you, as his friend I sought him here. I have also heard that this person —

TOM. Person! This is a sword, young man —

NASH. Confound me! It looks like one; and I perceive, Mr. Wilton, you, too, seem armed. Casket! (CASKET *goes to side of* WILTON; NASH

approaches TOM, *lays one hand on his arm, and with the other suddenly draws his sword;* CASKET *at the same moment takes sword from* WILTON.) They *are* swords!

WILT. 'Sdeath! fellow —

NASH. He is my officer — respect him. They *are* swords; I suffer no swords to be worn in Bath. You are strangers, or would have known the law. No big looks, gentlemen; for, by my honour, in my day I have disarmed a full third of the House of Lords.

Enter BAXTER.

BAXT. Mr. Dropper!

NASH. Very good. But you seek Mr. Derby? (*To* WILTON.) You'll find him, sir, in that room.

[*Exit* WILTON.

TOM. Derby here!

NASH. I sent for him to execute the bond. Your friend is just in time — we wanted a witness.

TOM. Why, indeed, I would rather that —

Enter DROPPER.

My dear Dropper, — pardon me an instant; I have a few words with his honour.

NASH. Pray take your time: the deed is ready,

Mr. Derby prepared, and 'tis but to write a cheque for the money. (*Retires up with* BAXTER *and* CLAPTRAP.)

DROPP. Tom (*laying his hat on table*), that's my hat.

TOM. I know it — 'tis a very old acquaintance.

DROPP. Humph! you'd use your old friends like hats; put 'em on and off as it served. There it is, I tell you, and I don't leave you until I have my share of the spoil.

TOM. Spoil!

DROPP. Come, all Bath's ringing with it, and yet you'd cheat me. Last night's spoil!

TOM. Upon my honour, —

DROPP. Your honour! Do you mean to insult me?

TOM. My dear friend, you are so vulgar — so prejudiced. Of course, you share; of course (*aside*) you do not.

DROPP. Well, it's enough to make one hate mankind. There is *no* friendship!

NASH. (*Aside to* BAXTER) And the ladies, — they are here?

BAXT. Safe at hand.

TOM. (*Aside*) I wonder that his majesty patronises Baxter.

DROPP. (*Aside*) No! There can be no deceit in Jack! And yet 'tis such a world!

Enter DERBY.

Mr. Derby!

DERB. (*To* TOM) Have you dogged me here?

TOM. Dogged! I believe, Mr. Derby, you owe me —

DERB. What, it matters little; my only hope is lost — I am a beggar. Still, I will sign the bond, and thus place my liberty in your hands. — I am at your mercy.

TOM. Liberty — mercy! What, sir, is there no money?

DERB. None.

TOM. Sir, — this is infamous. Am I to be robbed, sir?

NASH. I am shocked — thunderstruck. (*Aside to* TOM.) I am like you a philosopher — you therefore have my sympathy. I am a man of the world, you shall have my advice. 'Tis but a feint; he has money — arrest him.

TOM. That's true philosophy — I will.

NASH. (*Calling off*) John — send up the officers.

TOM. Officers! here! But first, proceedings —

NASH. Oh, the sheriff will be here with the corporation; and as a man of honour, Mr. Derby will sign and wait. I feel compromised, and take all responsibility on myself.

Enter OFFICERS.

NASH. (*Pointing to* TOM) Secure that man. (OFFICERS *seize him.*)

TOM. A mistake! That (*pointing to* DERBY) is the person.

NASH. Officers — hold fast! You are quite right.

TOM. Mr. Nash! *Va au diable!* (*Breaks from* OFFICERS, *seizes a sword from the table, and is making off, when he is encountered by* NASH, *who with the other sword disarms him;* TOM *falls.*)

NASH. Officers, pick up Lavender Tom. (DROPPER, *on the appearance of the* OFFICERS, *in mistake hurriedly seizes the hat of* NASH, *and is about to escape; he is arrested by* BAXTER, CLAPTRAP, *and* CASKET.)

CLAPT. A little mistake: you've taken his honour's hat!

NASH. Marquis, — I told you there was a significance in my white hat. Hold him, too.

TOM. But why is this — why?

NASH. Why? — Ladies! —

Enter MRS. CORAL, LOUISA, BELINDA, *and* WILTON.

Do you know this ring?

MRS. C. (*Seeing* TOM) That is the man who swore in French.

NASH. Do you know these ladies?

TOM. No!

NASH. Do you know this ring?

TOM. No.

DROPP. I do; for I see Baxter has trapped us. I took it from that lady, with twenty guineas. The marquis had half.

TOM. A lie.

DROPP. Look in his pocket. (*They search* TOM, *and find purse.*)

MRS. C. My purse!

DROPP. You know, Cæsar went halves. You'd have tricked me, Tom; now, we are even, and may yet hang good friends.

TOM. This comes of your vulgar avarice. It has lost us everything.

NASH. No, marquis; there is yet one thing to console you, — philosophy. Away with them. (TOM *and* DROPPER *are taken off.*)

DERB. What is all this?

NASH. A little offering of mine to justice. And now, sir, you see the knaves who would have plundered you?

DERB. I am lost in wonder at your kindness.

BEL. You are all goodness.

NASH. I can't say, — I killed a man this morning. Mr. Derby, I ask your uncle's pardon: though I believe I am down for his executor, as yet there is happily no need of my services.

Enter BEETLE.

BEET. So, madam! I find you here — in the house of the man who rejects you.

BEL. True, sir; and yet I hope to escape the willow — for here is the gentleman who has accepted me.

BAXT. (*Aside to* NASH) Now, your worship; a word to the alderman —

NASH. Alderman Beetle, Mr. Baxter —

BEET. Mr. Baxter, there is my niece: if I please, she has ten thousand pounds. I know your family to be an honourable, ancient —

NASH. Alderman, if any doubts exist with the heralds, here is, written by Mr. Baxter himself, his

whole life, character, and behaviour. (*Taking MS. from his pocket.*)

BAXT. (*Snatching the MS.*) I scratch a poor hand; when the book is printed, I'll send a copy. In the meantime, alderman, I wouldn't stand between Madam Belinda and Mr. Derby. No, — I wouldn't — upon my honour. [*Exit.*

NASH. Why, alderman, 'tis not Mr. Baxter from Staffordshire, but Jack Baxter, a poor rogue from Tunbridge, who has played my spy — who has enabled me to save young Derby, that he may be worthy of your niece. Come! there's no help for it: shall I join their hands?

BEET. If it must be so — and you will answer for the gentleman's reformation?

DERB. (*To* NASH) Trust me, sir, you may. I forswear play for ever.

NASH. I believe you, and will be your surety. But here are two other turtles, who, though silent, talk very eloquently. Mrs. Coral, you are a woman of discretion; what's to be done?

MRS. C. My brother, sir, is a very reasonable person; and if you're sure the gentleman is not of Mr. Powel's company — (*Music and shouts without.*)

BEET. Hark! The procession to attend you to

the rooms. Come; all Bath will be there to see your statue.

NASH. My statue! May I die, but now the time is come, I tremble to face the honour. What have I done that I should stand in marble? I'm a king, to be sure, and think the best of all governments is that of peace and good humour. 'Tis true, I declare war against nothing but meanness — scandal — and ill temper. If I mix with knaves 'tis to make knaves fall. Certain, my kingdom isn't large, but I sha'n't with my brother of Macedon weep for new empires — so I can keep all within my little realm happy in themselves, and at charity with all the world besides. If, as monarch, I can do this, it must be owned, though my sceptre be a feather, 'tis a bright one, and may, perhaps, continue to be swayed by gay

"BEAU NASH, THE KING OF BATH."

Beau Fielding

From a contemporary engraving

BEAU FIELDING

BEAU FIELDING

On Wits and Beaux — Scotland Yard in Charles II.'s Day — Orlando of *The Tatler* — Beau Fielding, Justice of the Peace — Adonis in Search of a Wife — The Sham Widow — Ways and Means — Barbara Villiers, Lady Castlemaine — Quarrels with the King — The Beau's Second Marriage — The Last Days of Fops and Beaux.

LET us be wise, boys, here's a fool coming, said a sensible man, when he saw Beau Nash's splendid carriage draw up to the door. Is a beau a fool? Is a sharper a fool? Was Bonaparte a fool? If you reply "no" to the last two questions, you must give the same answer to the first. A beau is a fox, but not a fool — a very clever fellow, who, knowing the weakness of his brothers and sisters in the world, takes advantage of it to make himself a fame and a fortune. Nash, the son of a glass-merchant — Brummell, the hopeful of a small shopkeeper — became the intimates of princes, dukes, and fashionables; were

petty kings of Vanity Fair, and were honoured by their subjects. In the kingdom of the blind, the one-eyed man is king; in the realm of folly, the sharper is a monarch. The only proviso is, that the cheat come not within the jurisdiction of the law. Such a cheat is the beau or dandy, or fine gentleman, who imposes on his public by his clothes and appearance. *Bonâ-fide* monarchs have done as much: Louis XIV. won himself the title of Le Grand Monarque by his manners, his dress, and his vanity. Fielding, Nash, and Brummell did nothing more. It is not a question whether such roads to eminence be contemptible or not, but whether their adoption in one station of life be more so than in another. Was Brummell a whit more contemptible than "Wales?" Or is John Thomas, the pride and glory of the "Domestics' Free-and-Easy," whose whiskers, figure, face, and manner are all superb, one atom more ridiculous than your recognised beau? I trow not. What right, then, has your beau to a place among wits? I fancy Chesterfield would be much disgusted at seeing his name side by side with that of Nash in this volume; yet Chesterfield had no objection, when at Bath, to do homage to the king of that city, and may have prided himself on

exchanging pinches from diamond-set snuff-boxes with that superb gold-laced dignitary in the pump-room. Certainly, people who thought little of Philip Dormer Stanhope, thought a great deal of the glass-merchant's reprobate son when he was in power, and submitted without a murmur to his impertinences. The fact is that the beaux and the wits are more intimately connected than the latter would care to own: the wits have all been, or aspired to be, beaux, and beaux have had their fair share of wit; both lived for the same purpose — to shine in society: both used the same means — coats and *bons mots*. The only distinction is, that the garments of the beaux were better, and their sayings not so good as those of the wits; while the conversation of the wits was better, and their apparel not so striking as those of the beaux. So, my Lord Chesterfield, who prided yourself quite as much on being a fine gentleman as on being a fine wit, you cannot complain at your proximity to Mr. Nash and others who were fine gentlemen, and would have been fine wits if they could.

Robert Fielding was, perhaps, the least of the beaux; but then, to make up for this, he belonged to a noble family: he married a duchess, and, what

is more, he beat her. Surely in the kingdom of fools such a man is not to be despised. You may be sure he did not think he was, for was he not made the subject of two papers in *The Tatler*, and what more could such a man desire?

His father was a Suffolk squire, claiming relationship with the Earls of Denbigh, and therefore with the Hapsburgs, from whom the Beau and the Emperors of Austria had the common honour of being descended. Perhaps neither of them had sufficient sense to be proud of the greatest intellectual ornament of their race, the author of "Tom Jones;" but as our hero was dead before the humourist was born, it is not fair to conjecture what he might have thought on the subject.

It does not appear that very much is known of this great gem of the race of Hapsburg. He had the misfortune to be very handsome, and the folly to think that his face would be his fortune: it certainly stood him in good stead at times, but it also brought him into a lamentable dilemma.

His father was not rich, and sent his son to the Temple to study laws which he was only fitted to break. The young Adonis had sense enough to see that destiny did not beckon him to fame in the gloom of a musty law court, and removed a

little farther up to the Thames and the more fashionable region of Scotland Yard. Here, where now Z 300 repairs to report his investigations to a commissioner, the young dandies of Charles II.'s day strutted in gay doublets, swore hasty oaths of choice invention, smoked the true Tobago from huge pipe-bowls, and ogled the fair but not too bashful dames who passed to and fro in their chariots. The court took its name from the royalties of Scotland, who, when they visited the South, were there lodged, as being conveniently near to Whitehall Palace. It is odd enough that the three architects, Inigo Jones, Vanbrugh, and Wren, all lived in this yard.

It was not to be supposed that a man who could so well appreciate a handsome face and well-cut doublet as Charles II. should long overlook his neighbour, Mr. Robert Fielding, and in due course the Beau, who had no other diploma, found himself in the honourable position of a justice of the peace.

The emoluments of this office enabled Orlando, as *The Tatler* calls him, to shine forth in all his glory. With an enviable indifference to the future, he launched out into an expenditure which alone would have made him popular in a country

where the heaviest purse makes the greatest gentleman. His lackeys were arrayed in the brightest yellow coats with black sashes — the Hapsburg colours. He had a carriage, of course, but, like Sheridan's, it was hired, though drawn by his own horses. This carriage was described as being shaped like a sea-shell, and *The Tatler* calls it "an open tumbril of less size than ordinary, to show the largeness of his limbs and the grandeur of his personage to the best advantage." The said limbs were Fielding's especial pride: he gloried in the strength of his leg and arm; and when he walked down the street, he was followed by an admiring crowd, whom he treated with as much haughtiness as if he had been the emperor himself, instead of his cousin five hundred times removed. He used his strength to good or bad purpose, and was a redoubted fighter and bully, though good-natured withal. In the Mall, as he strutted, he was the cynosure of all female eyes. His dress had all the elegance of which the graceful costume of that period was capable, though Fielding did not, like Brummell, understand the delicacy of a quiet, but studied style. Those were simpler, somewhat more honest days. It was not necessary for a man to cloak his vices, nor be ashamed of

his cloak. The beau then-a-day openly and arrogantly gloried in the grandeur of his attire; and bragging was a part of his character. Fielding was made by his tailor; Brummell made his tailor: the only point in common to both was that neither of them paid the tailor's bill.

The fine gentleman, under the Stuarts, was fine only in his lace and his velvet doublet; his language was coarse, his manners coarser, his vices the coarsest of all. No wonder, when the king himself could get so drunk with Sedley and Buckhurst as to be unable to give an audience appointed for, and when the chief fun of his two companions was to divest themselves of all the habiliments which civilisation has had the ill taste to make necessary, and in that state run about the streets.

"Orlando" wore the finest ruffles and the heaviest sword; his wig was combed to perfection, and in his pocket he carried a little comb with which to arrange it from time to time, even as the dandy of to-day pulls out his whiskers or curls his moustache. Such a man could not be passed over, and accordingly he numbered half the officers and gallants of the town among his intimates. He drank, swore, and swaggered, and the snobs of the day proclaimed him a "complete gentleman."

His impudence, however, was not always tolerated. In the playhouses of the day, it was the fashion for some of the spectators to stand upon the stage, and the places in that position were chiefly occupied by young gallants. The ladies came most in masks, but this did not prevent Master Fielding from making his remarks very freely, and in no very refined strain, to them. The modest damsels, whom Pope has described, —

> "The fair sat pouting at the courtier's play,
> And not a mask went unimproved away:
> The modest fan was lifted up no more,
> And virgins smiled at what they blushed before," —

were not too coy to be pleased with the fops' attentions, and replied in like strain. The players were unheeded; the audience laughed at the improvised and natural wit, when carefully prepared dialogues failed to fix their attention. The actors were disgusted, and, in spite of Master Fielding's herculean strength, kicked him off the stage, with a warning not to come again.

The rôle of a beau is expensive to keep up; and our justice of the peace could not, like Nash, double his income by gaming. He soon got deeply into debt, as every celebrated dresser has done. The old

story, not new even in those days, was enacted, — and the brilliant Adonis had to keep watch and ward against tailors and bailiffs. On one occasion they had nearly caught him; but his legs being lengthy, he gave them fair sport as far as St. James's Palace, where the officers on guard rushed out to save their pet, and drove off the myrmidons of the law at the point of the sword.

But debts do not pay themselves, nor die, and Orlando with all his strength and prowess could not long keep off the constable. Evil days gloomed at no very great distance before him, and the fear of a sponging-house and debtors' prison compelled him to turn his handsome person to account. Had he not broken a hundred hearts already? had he not charmed a thousand pairs of beaming eyes? was there not one owner of one pair who was also possessed of a pretty fortune? Who should have the honour of being the wife of such an Adonis? who, indeed, but she who could pay highest for it; and who could pay with a handsome income but a well-dowered widow? A widow it must be — a widow it should be. Noble indeed was the sentiment which inspired this great man to sacrifice himself on the altar of Hymen for the good of his creditors. Ye young men in the Guards, who

do this kind of thing every day, — that is, every day that you can meet with a widow with the proper qualifications, — take warning by the lamentable history of Mr. Robert Fielding, and never trust to "third parties."

A widow was found, fat, fair, and forty — and oh! — charm greater far than all the rest — with a fortune of sixty thousand pounds; this was a Mrs. Deleau, who lived at Whaddon in Surrey, and at Copthall-court in London. Nothing could be more charming; and the only obstacle was the absence of all acquaintance between the parties — for, of course, it was impossible for any widow, whatever her attractions, to be insensible to those of Robert Fielding. Under these circumstances, the Beau looked about for an agent, and found one in the person of a Mrs. Villars, hair-dresser to the widow. He offered this person a handsome douceur in case of success, and she was to undertake that the lady should meet the gentleman in the most unpremeditated manner. Various schemes were resorted to: with the *alias*, for he was not above an *alias*, of Major-General Villars, the Beau called at the widow's country-house, and was permitted to see the gardens. At a window he espied a lady, whom he took to be the object of his pur-

suit — bowed to her majestically, and went away, persuaded he must have made an impression. But, whether the widow was wiser than wearers of weeds have the reputation of being, or whether the agent had really no power in the matter, the meeting never came on.

The hair-dresser naturally grew anxious, the douceur was too good to be lost, and as the widow could not be had, some one must be supplied in her place.

One day while the Beau was sitting in his splendid "night-gown," as the morning-dress of gentlemen was then called, two ladies were ushered into his august presence. He had been warned of this visit, and was prepared to receive the yielding widow. The one, of course, was the hair-dresser, the other a young, pretty, and apparently modest creature, who blushed much — though with some difficulty — at the trying position in which she found herself. The Beau, delighted, did his best to reassure her. He flung himself at her feet, swore, with oaths more fashionable than delicate, that she was the only woman he ever loved, and prevailed on the widow so far as to induce her to "call again to-morrow."

Of course she came, and Adonis was in heaven.

He wrote little poems to her, — for, as a gallant, he could of course make verses, — serenaded her through an Italian donna, invited her to suppers at which the delicacies of the season were served without regard to the purveyor's account, and to which, coy as she was, she consented to come, and clenched the engagement with a ring, on which was the motto, "Tibi Soli." Nay, the Beau had been educated, and had some knowledge of "the tongues," so that he added to these attentions the further one of a song or two translated from the Greek. The widow ought to have been pleased, and was. One thing only she stipulated, namely, that the marriage should be private, lest her relations should forbid the banns.

Having brought her so far, it was not likely that the fortune-hunter would stick at such a mere trifle, and accordingly an entertainment was got up at the Beau's own rooms, a supper suitable to the rank and wealth of the widow, provided by some obligingly credulous tradesman; a priest found — for, be it premised, our hero had changed so much of his religion as he had to change in the reign of James II., when Romanism was not only fashionable, but a sure road to fortune — and the mutually satisfied couple swore to

love, honour, and obey one another till death them should part.

The next morning, however, the widow left the gentleman's lodgings, on the pretext that it was injudicious for her friends to know of their union at present, and continued to visit her sposo and sup somewhat amply at his chambers from time to time. We can imagine the anxiety Orlando now felt for a cheque-book at the heiress's bankers, and the many insinuations he may have delicately made, touching ways and means. We can fancy the artful excuses with which these hints were put aside by his attached wife. But the dupe was still in happy ignorance of the trick played on him, and for a time such ignorance was bliss. It must have been trying to him to be called on by Mrs. Villars for the promised douceur, but he consoled himself with the pleasures of hope.

Unfortunately, however, he had formed the acquaintance of a woman of a very different reputation to the real Mrs. Deleau, and the intimacy which ensued was fatal to him.

When Charles II. was wandering abroad, he was joined among others, by a Mr. and Mrs. Palmer. The husband was a stanch old Romanist, with the qualities which usually accompanied that faith in

those days — little respect for morality, and a good deal of bigotry. In later days he was one of the victims suspected of the Titus Oates plot, but escaped, and eventually died in Wales, in 1705, after having been James II.'s ambassador to Rome. This, in a few words, is the history of that Roger Palmer, afterward Lord Castlemaine, who by some is said to have sold his wife — not at Smithfield, but at Whitehall — to his Majesty, King Charles II., for the sum of one peerage, — an Irish one, taken on consideration; by others is alleged to have been so indignant with the king as to have remained for some time far from court, and so disgusted with his elevation to the peerage as scarcely to assume his title; and this last is the most authenticated version of the matter.

Mrs. Palmer belonged to one of the oldest families in England, and traced her descent to Pagan de Villiers, in the days of William Rufus, and a good deal farther among the nobles of Normandy. She was the daughter of William, second Viscount Grandison, and rejoiced in the appropriate name of Barbara, for she could be savage occasionally. She was very beautiful, and very wicked, and soon became Charles's mistress. On the Restoration she joined the king in England, and when the poor

neglected queen came over, was foisted upon her as a bedchamber-woman, in spite of all the objections of that ill-used wife. It was necessary to this end that she should be the wife of a peer ; and her husband accepted the title of Earl of Castlemaine, well knowing to what he owed it. Pepys, who admired Lady Castlemaine more than any woman in England, describes the husband and wife meeting at Whitehall with a cold, ceremonial bow : yet the husband was there. A quarrel between the two, strangely enough on the score of religion, her ladyship insisting that her child should be christened by a Protestant clergyman, while his lordship insisted on the ceremony being performed by a Romish priest, brought about a separation, and from that time Lady Castlemaine, lodged in Whitehall, began her empire over the King of England. That man, "who never said a foolish thing, and never did a wise one," was the slave of this imperious and most impudent of women. She forced him to settle on her an immense fortune, much of which she squandered at the basset-table, often staking a thousand pounds at a time, and sometimes losing fifteen thousand pounds a night.

Nor did her wickedness end here. We have some pity for one, who, like La Vallière, could be

attracted by the attentions of a handsome, fascinating prince: we pity though we blame. But Lady Castlemaine was vicious to the very marrow. Not content with a king's favour, she courted herself the young gallant of the town. Quarrels ensued between Charles and his mistress, in which the latter invariably came off victorious, owing to her indomitable temper; and the scenes recorded by De Grammont — when she threatened to burn down Whitehall, and tear her children to pieces — are too disgraceful for insertion. She forced the reprobate monarch to consent to all her extortionate demands; rifled the nation's pockets as well as his own; and at every fresh difference, forced Charles to give her some new pension. An intrigue with Jermyn, discovered and objected to by the king, brought on a fresh and more serious difference, which was only patched up by a patent of the duchy of Cleveland. The Duchess of Cleveland was even worse than the Countess of Castlemaine. Abandoned in time by Charles, and detested by all people of any decent feeling, she consoled herself for the loss of a real king by taking up with a stage one. Hart and Goodman, the actors, were successively her cavalieri; the former had been a captain in the army, the latter

a student at Cambridge. Both were men of the coarsest minds and most depraved lives. Goodman in after years was so reduced that, finding, as Sheridan advised his son to do, a pair of pistols handy, a horse saddled, and Hounslow Heath not a hundred miles distance, he took to the pleasant and profitable pastime of which Dick Turpin is the patron saint. He was all but hanged for his daring robberies, but unfortunately not quite so. He lived to suffer such indigence that he and another rascal had but one under-garment between them, and entered into a compact that one should lie in bed while the other wore the article in question. Naturally enough the two fell out in time, and the end of Goodman — sad misnomer — was worse than his beginning: such was the gallant whom the imperious Duchess of Cleveland vouchsafed to honour.

The life of the once beautiful Barbara Villiers grew daily more and more depraved. At the age of thirty she retired to Paris, shunned and disgraced. After numerous intrigues abroad and at home, she put the crowning point to her follies by falling in love with the handsome Fielding, when she herself numbered sixty-five summers.

Whether the Beau still thought of fortune, or whether having once tried matrimony, he was so enchanted with it as to make it his cacoethes, does not appear. The legend explains not for what reason he married the antiquated beauty only three weeks after he had been united to the supposed widow. For a time he wavered between the two, but that time was short; the widow discovered his second marriage, claimed him, and in so doing revealed the well-kept secret that she was not a widow; indeed, not even the relict of John Deleau, Esq., of Whaddon, but a wretched adventurer of the name of Mary Wadsworth, who had shared with Mrs. Villars the plunder of the trick. The Beau tried to preserve his dignity, and throw over his duper, but in vain. The first wife reported the state of affairs to the second; and the duchess, who had been shamefully treated by Master Fielding, was only too glad of an opportunity to get rid of him. She offered Mary Wadsworth a pension of £100 a year, and a sum of £200 in ready money, to prove the previous marriage. The case came on, and Beau Fielding had the honour of playing a part in a famous state trial.

With his usual impudence he undertook to defend himself at the Old Bailey, and hatched up

some old story to prove that the first wife was married at the time of their union to one Brady; but the plea fell to the ground, and the fine gentleman was sentenced to be burned in the hand. His interest in certain quarters saved him this ignominious punishment which would, doubtless, have spoiled a limb of which he was particularly proud. He was pardoned; the real widow married a far more honourable gentleman, in spite of the unenviable notoriety she had acquired; the sham one was somehow quieted, and the duchess died some four years later, the more peacefully for being rid of her tyrannical mate.

Thus ended a petty scandal of the day, in which all the parties were so disreputable that no one could feel any sympathy for a single one of them. How the dupe himself ended is not known. The last days of fops and beaux are never glorious. Brummell died in slovenly penury; Nash in contempt. Fielding lapsed into the dimmest obscurity; and as far as evidence goes, there is as little certainty about his death as of that of the Wandering Jew. Let us hope that he is not still alive; though his friends seemed to have cared little whether he were so or not, to judge from a couple of verses written by one of them:

" If Fielding is dead,
And rests under this stone,
Then he is not alive,
You may bet two to one.

" But if he's alive,
And does not lie there —
Let him live till he's hanged,
For which no man will care."

THE END.

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